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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE NATURE OF SUPERINTENDENT VALUES AND THEIR ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

by

TERRENCE J. WENDEL ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

The primary assumption of this study was that values must be considered as part of any effective decision-making or problem-solving activity for educational administrators. Consequently, the aim of the study was to understand better the nature of superintendent values and how these values influenced their problem-solving and decision-making. An interpretive approach, following the assumptions of naturalistic, phenomenological inquiry, was used as the methodology for the study.

Eight practicing superintendents of schools served as the participants for the study and each participated in one in-depth tape recorded interview. Interviews were transcribed and the text from these interviews formed the basis for the interpretations made and for writing a series of narrative stories to describe superintendent actions and beliefs. Analysis of the material identified six highly related sub-themes: 1) professional beliefs and values; 2) assessing the rightness of decisions; 3) building of agreements and reconciling political interests; 4) power, authority, relationships with others, and decision-making; 5) policy development and implementation; and 6) management and leadership.

Findings showed that the superintendents in the study possessed a highly developed value of integrity--a sense of wholeness--which strongly influenced their practice. Imbedded in this sense of integrity were the values of trust, honesty, openness, concern for others, a sense of mission and vision to serve students to the best that they possibly could, a strong religious orientation, a belief that intellect and rationality could not always suffice in making decisions and solving problems, and a dialectic over process and substance.

While the superintendents sought and actively encouraged the involvement of others in making decisions and in solving problems, they were not prepared to abrogate fundamental beliefs if consensus could not be reached. Superintendents were prepared to make the final decision, particularly if a consensually developed decision was in violation of the best interests of students, represented self-interests of the groups involved, or threatened the financial viability of the school system. They also expressed the importance of a mission for the school system and their own concomitant vision as to where the system should be in relation to its present achievements. While they had a strong sense of direction and attempted to do the right things in accordance with their value base, they fequently second-guessed their actions.

In the area of policy, superintendents chose to be facilitative and supportive; they encouraged the exercise of discretion by others as the basis for decentralized decision-making as opposed to simple rule-following. All expressed reservations over their own ability to direct and control the school system through the use of power and authority and recognized the danger in "cogitating" with themselves to make unilateral decisions.

The value of relationships with others was very important and they saw these relationships not only as the basis for achieving ends, but as ends in themselves. In dealing with others, these superintendents stressed the importance of maintaining the dignity of others, particularly if their decisions had a significant negative effect on the individual.

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Chapter One

Orientation to the Study

Introduction

> We have swung so far in the direction of science, however, that it would be healthy for us now to realize that administration is essentially one of the humanities. Administration is, or at least ought to be, wedded to subjects such as philosophy, literature, history and art, and not merely to engineering, finance, and structure. Administration is administrators. Administrators become increasingly human and philosophical, capable of planning ongoing programs which meet human needs and aspirations, when they are unified by areas of knowledge and skill which stress man's humanity and his philosophical insights. (Dimock, 1958, p. 5)

The notion that leaders should be philosophers is not new. Indeed, the tradition may be found as far back as Plato but the notion has not been widely accepted primarily because, as institutions have become more bureaucratic and have acquired more functions, leadership has been identified with either managerial or interpersonal skills, or with charismatic personality (Housego, 1991, p. 3). In addition, manifesting a philosophical orientation to administration could be viewed not only as impractical, but also as elitist and possibly incompatible with the industrial imperatives of modern society. In the search for a more practical and scientific base for administration, theorists turned to positivist and behaviorist schools of thought. As Hodgkinson (1983) pointed out,

> the positivists in particular and the behaviorists generally, with Simon as a prototypical exponent, would be content to regard administrative process as being a negotiation of means-ends chains wherein ends are given or derived from elsewhere and it is the function of the executive merely to satisfice such means-ends consummation according to the metavaluational criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. (p. 11)

In this context, the positivists and behaviourists increasingly defined administrative leadership in terms of management, efficiency, and production. Unfortunately, this view of leadership does not value critical reflection, autonomy, or collective deliberation, and, as Codd (1989) stated, "it is a view of leadership that is particularly inappropriate to educational institutions because it negates the *educational* purposes of those institutions [italics in the original]" (p. 157).

These educational purposes are embodied in the fundamental values of the educational administrator. Accordingly, this dissertation sought to probe the nature of administrative values and the roles that these values play as administrators make decisions and solve problems. Specifically, the nature and role of values for Alberta school superintendents were examined to assist in understanding why these superintendents do what they do.

The Problem to be Addressed in the Research

Some research has been conducted to determine the role that values play in the decision-making and problem-solving activities of school principals but little, to this date, has occurred in those same areas in relation to superintendents of schools. Accordingly, the following major question was proposed to guide the study:

What role do values play in the decision-making and problem-solving activities of Alberta school system superintendents?

In addition, the following related questions were addressed in the study:

1. To what extent do the values held by superintendents influence the identification and selection of priorities for the school system?

2. How do superintendents provide for the debate and containment of values within the political arena of the organization?

3. How do superintendents resolve, within the administrative process, those value conflicts and value dilemmas which occur in the school system?

4. What, in the minds of superintendents, constitutes good and right administrative action in the context of specific issues and policies?

5. What co-operative actions do superintendents take to realize the attainment of values within the school system?

Basic Assumptions Inherent in the Study

This study was premised on two basic assumptions. First, educators, regardless of the capacity in which they work, are involved in judging and deciding what ought to be done. In judging and deciding, as Codd (1989) stated, "whether they are determining ends or means, they cannot escape the commitment to values; neither can they ignore the careful appraisal of the facts pertinent to each decision" (p. 160). Bringing these two components together produces the responsibility criterion which is so very important in education. Effective and professional educational administration must, therefore, involve responsible deliberation and decision-making based upon educational principles, values, and facts.

Second, this study is based upon the assumption that values are crucial determinants of effective decision-making and problem-solving behaviors of the superintendent. Educational leadership, as Codd (1989) stated, "entails commitment to a set of educational values and principles for practice. These values and principles do not constitute a body of doctrine or a particular set of beliefs, but rather a disposition towards rational reflection and deliberative action which is fundamentally philosophical in nature" (p. 161).

Justification of the Research Topic

In 1945, Herbert Simon published a book which had, and continues to have, a significant impact upon the study of administration. Entitled *Administrative Behavior*, the book gave impetus to the value-free study of decision-making and administrative rationality. Simon (1945) emphasized the factual basis of choice and recognized that making decisions was the essence of administration. Greenfield (1986), who reacted to Simon's influence upon the study of administration, noted

> Simon's aim and hope were sweeping and daring: to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring that administrators chose--within the limits of the rationality open to them--the best possible means to achieve a given end. (p. 62)

As Greenfield (1986) stated, Simon (1945) would have us believe "administrative man had to disappear as a value-bearer and willful and unpredictable choice-maker" (p. 62). It would follow that decision-making requires more than technical skills, more than an awareness and an assessment of the environment and the situation in which the administrator works, and more than an objective, rational, and scientific choice to determine the best possible means to achieve a given end. The foregoing assumption is best illustrated by Hodgkinson (1983) who stated, "a central administrative question has now become value-philosophical and can be stated simply as, how can men administer each other so as to minimize the evil done by organizations" (p. 14)?

The most popular model of leadership is that which views leadership as a social-psychological phenomenon. As Murphy, Hallinger and Mitman (1983) stated, this model "requires the use of different behaviors in different situations and with different members of an organization" (p. 300). Thus, effective leaders presumably are those who are able to call appropriate behaviors into action in a given circumstance. In addition, the effective leader or administrator is seen to possess a body of theoretical and pragmatic knowledge, an ability to read situations, intuition, tacit knowledge and the ability to integrate theory and diagnostic information to plan a course of action. However, it would seem that a crucial component is missing in this characterization of effective leadership.

This component rests in understanding that individual and communitarian values held by the administrator are as much of a part of the decision process, and are as important, as rationality. These values, both of an individual and a communitarian nature, are used by the administrator to the extent that administration becomes a moral enterprise. This moral enterprise is particularly necessary because, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated,

> modern developments such as systems theory techniques, operations research, group dynamics and personnel psychology have had the effect of emphasizing the quasi-scientific aspect of administrative thought, to the detriment of ethical and philosophical considerations. Means have overshadowed ends and there has been a sort of anesthesia of the administrative sense of value. (p. 16)

Assumptions Inherent in the Philosophical Orientation of the Research Design

Ontological Assumptions. In any study, the researcher brings to the work an orientation or a set of beliefs about the nature of reality and what constitutes knowledge about phenomena. Within the context of this study, the researcher treated school systems as socially constructed realities in which individuals, working by themselves and collectively, shape the environment. Thus, superintendents are viewed as operating with technical rationality and, more importantly, normative rationality in maintaining and changing that environment.

Accordingly, the essential assumption was that the superintendent's experience is essentially phenomenological in nature and, as such, does not lend itself to study by a series of laws or theories which can serve to predict and control those experiences. Indeed, the central ontological premise is, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated, that "administration is a complex and pervasive human process [carried out] within an overall context of human values. Values impinge upon and are entwined in every phase of the administrative process" (p. 3). Thus, to gain an understanding of the nature of these values and the degree to which they influence administrative action of the superintendents, it is most appropriate that they be acquired from the words and experiences of those directly involved.

The second ontological assumption was that the world of values is made by the superintendent. Indeed, it was assumed that superintendents, in practicing leadership in their school systems, overcome certain factual constraints by the application of specific values to phenomenological issues. It was further assumed that the values held by the superintendent give meaning to the world in which the superintendent functions.

Axiological Assumptions. The primary axiological assumption underlying this study was that normative rationality influences the leadership of superintendents because each of them brings biases, prejudices, ways of thinking, personality quirks, and notions of what works and what does not to the reality in which the superintendent operates. Thus, the answers to the questions of "how?" and "what?" cannot be resolved in purely objective, rational ways. They must, on the other hand, be answered in a normative manner wherein the superintendent decides what ought to be the case. Deciding what ought to be the case cannot be determined solely by investigating what is the case. Normative assertions are, by their very nature, moral statements which are based upon the degree to which the superintendent's morality reflects a concern for others. Axiologically, it was therefore assumed that normative rationality is as important as, if not more important than, technical rationality in determining how superintendents solve problems and make decisions.

In this vein, it is important to reflect upon Hodgkinson's (1983) admonition that "the three irreducible elements of decision are fact, probabilities, and values" (p. 29).

Epistemological Assumptions. From an epistemological point of view, it was assumed that this study would further an understanding of which values govern the choice of ends and means of superintendents. In addition, it was assumed that the study would provide an understanding of whose values prevail in critical incidents and issues.

The ontological, axiological, and epistemological assumptions inherent in this study are consistent with the interpretive paradigm which seeks not to predict and control human behaviour, but rather to understand actions and to determine, in a phenomenological sense, how values influence those actions.

In summary, this study examines superintendent's experiences to better understand the value orientations inherent in the actions they took. There is little doubt that each superintendent brings to particular situations beliefs, values, quirks, and an individual personality which influence what and how things are done. Further, because these experiences are phenomenological in nature, understanding why particular courses of action are taken is far more valuable than examining the actions themselves so as to predict what administrative actions prospective administrators should take in like situations. Finally, the study is premised on the assumption that the normative rationality of superintendents is as important as the logical, analytical skills they bring to particular situations.

The Research Orientation for the Study

The study was guided by a general orientation to research in the interpretive (hermeneutic) paradigm and used, for conceptual purposes, the values paradigm as developed by Hodgkinson (1983, pp. 36-56) to reflect upon the life experiences of superintendents.

Within the values paradigm (Figure 1.1), values are viewed as subjective because they are concepts and are highly phenomenological in nature. However, the values paradigm can, in Hodgkinson's (1983) words, "be applied to any action or event" (p. 45) in order to better understand the meaning of the event in relation to values. Indeed, the value paradigm is related to the Aristotelian notion of praxis, a practical philosophy, wherein humanity, through actions, seeks to find or to lead the good life. As a theoretical construct, the values paradigm can serve to inform or enlighten practice; it does not determine practice.

Figure 1.1

The Values Paradigm

Value Type	**Grounds of Value**	**Psychological Faculty**	**Philosophical Orientations**	**Value Level**	
I	PRINCIPLES	conation willing	religion existentialism intuition	I	**RIGHT**
IIA	CONSEQUENCE	cognition reason	utilitarianism pragmatism	II	
IIB	CONSENSUS	thinking	humanism democratic liberalism		
III	PREFERENCE	affect emotion feeling	behaviourism positivism hedonism	III	**GOOD**

Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 78.

Schleirmacher (1964) spoke to the issue of theory and practice and commented that "the integrity of praxis does not depend upon theory, but praxis can become more aware of itself by means of theory" (p. 40). Within the values paradigm, values are classified according to four types of answers which can be given to the question "why is an object or action, or event deemed to be good or right" (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 37)? Hodgkinson (1983) outlined four grounds which can be used to justify the valuing process. These four grounds include principles (Type I Values), consequences (Type IIA Values), consensus (Type IIB Values), and preference (Type III Values).

Type I Values are those which are trans-rational; they go beyond reason and imply an act of faith or intent or will and are demonstrated by the acceptance of a principle. Hodgkinson (1983) stated "these values are essentially metaphysical in origin or location. Often they derive, or it is claimed they derive, from such rationally intractable phenomenological entities such as conscience and intuition" (p. 39). Thus, these values are based on a high degree of commitment to an ideal (i.e., principle) and require a degree of freedom of will so that the commitment to the principle or ideal can occur. Level I values imply intense responsibility to choose or to commit to a principle and thus, imply as well, significant agonies in choosing. In Level I, for example, the value of honesty would be grounded in principle.

Type II values, whether of the A or B variety, are typically justified on the grounds of rationality. This can occur first as consensus (IIB) when one finds something to be right or wrong because there is an expressed social consensus manifested in law (policy) for or against that phenomenon or action. Individual preference is considered in light of the preferences stated by society, group membership, or an organization. In Type IIA values, a higher level of rationality occurs and the value is established by an analysis of the consequences of holding it. The test of a value judgment or an act is its consequences and, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated, "much ethical and moral disquisition is devoted to analytical reasoning of this kind" (p. 39).

To utilize the honesty value again, its relationship to Type IIA and IIB values is determined because the value has been reasoned about or because it is the norm of some group to which the individual belongs. Thus, Type II values are cognitive-rational and the associated philosophical tendencies are inclined toward the pragmatic and the utilitarian.

Type III Values are justified on the grounds that the object or action is liked or preferred by the subject. Preferences may be innate or, as is most generally regarded to be the case, learned. Within the latter case, great efforts are expended by political and commercial interests to change the Type III preferences of their potential customers or political constituents.

Honesty, in relation to Type III values, would be considered desirable simply because it is preferred to dishonesty. In a more pragmatic sense, it may be less trouble to be honest than to lie depending upon how one feels at the time such a question arises. In sum, Type I values invoke the aspect of will. Type II values are cognitive-rational and Type III values are emotive and affective in source. Hodgkinson (1983) stated that "the crucial thing about any value is its level or type" (p. 41). This concept becomes exceedingly important in the study of educational administration since, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated,

> the modal level for administration generally is Level II where the philosophical tendencies in so far as they can be labeled at all are inclined towards the pragmatic and the utilitarian. It is understandable, after all, that most executives would have . . . a prima-facie concern with the greatest good for the greatest number within the field of their authority and power, and with the pragmatic, getting things done, the art of the possible. (p. 40)

The second component of the research orientation deals with linking the typology to educational administration. Based on recent research with principals, (Begley and Leithwood, 1989; Campbell, 1988; Leithwood and Steinbach, 1991), a classification of values potentially useful to administrators was created to determine which values influenced problem-solving and decision-making. Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) developed a classification system which included four major categories of values and sixteen values within those categories (see Figure 1.2). These sixteen values and the four broad value categories can be related to Hodgkinson's (1983) Value Paradigm to determine which values enable the reflection upon and the derivation of the meaning of crucial incidents involving decision-making and problem-solving for the superintendent.

Immegart (1988), in his review of leadership, effectively linked the values of a leader or, for the purposes of this study, a superintendent, to the context in which the leader works, the mission, goals or objectives chosen, the actions taken to achieve those objectives, and the results obtained. In this linkage (Figure 1.3), Immegart (1988) effectively demonstrated what both Hodgkinson (1983) and Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) advocated: Values are a factor in the decision processes of leaders.

Figure 1.2

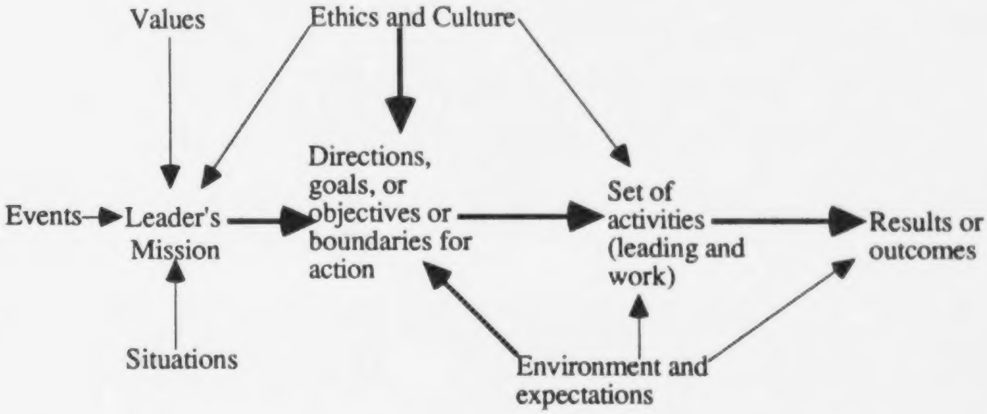
A Classification of Values Potentially Relevant in Administrative Problem-solving

1. Basic Human Values 1.1 Freedom 1.2 Happiness 1.3 Knowledge 1.4 Respect for others 1.5 Survival	**3. Professional Values** 3.1 General responsibility as educator 3.2 Specific role responsibility 3.3 Consequences for immediate clients (students, parents, staff) 3.4 Consequences for others (society-at-large, community)
2. General Moral Values 2.1 Carefulness 2.2 Fairness (or justice) 2.3 Courage	**4. Social and Political Values** 4.1 Participation 4.2 Sharing 4.3 Loyalty, solidarity, and commitment 4.4 Helping others

Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991, p. 19.

Figure 1.3

Model of a Broad Conceptualization of Leadership


Values
Ethics and Culture
Directions, goals, or objectives or boundaries for action
Set of activities (leading and work)
Events
Leader's Mission
Results or outcomes
Situations
Environment and expectations

Immegart, 1988, in N.J. Boyan (Ed.), p. 274.

Chapter Two

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

The literature germane to this study consists of the examination of three basic and highly interrelated themes. The first theme is concerned with the reasons for considering that educational administration consists of a moral imperative. In this sense, the moral imperative relates directly to the unequal distribution of power and authority between an administrator and the rest of the staff in educational organizations. Sergiovanni (1991) has written extensively on this aspect of administration and his views, with those of Barnard (1938), Greenfield (1984, 1986), Hodgkinson (1983), and Selznick (1957) are examined to show the relationship among values, moral responsibility and the actions administrators take. The literature reflects a view of administration as philosophy-in-action, and the nature of axiology, the study of values, is explored in this context.

The second theme is concerned with the work that superintendents do and the relationship of the work to values, both those of an individual and an organizational nature. Drawing heavily on the work of Canadian researchers (Allison, 1989; Boich, Farquhar, & Leithwood, 1989; Coleman & LaRocque, 1987; Genge, 1991; Leithwood & Musella, 1991; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991; McLeod, 1984; Musella, 1990), the review shows that Canadian superintendents are experiencing a significant change in roles and a concomitant conflict between their own values and those held by others in the educational enterprise.

The third theme deals with the principles of ethics and morality that characterize the educational enterprise. Conflicts between people, especially between educational administrators and other stakeholders, are premised on the assumption that relationships among people cause the conflicts and that the resolution of those conflicts requires an examination of values, especially those related to power and control. Follett's (1927, 1932) work is especially germane to the issue of value conflicts and their ultimate resolution and this work is explored in depth. Secondly, principles of morality (Kant, tr. 1959; Kohlberg, 1984; Lyons, 1991) and ethics (Robinson & Moulton, 1985) are explored and related to the practice of educational administration. Thirdly, the work of Housego (1991) is used to illustrate that the Canadian polity consists of such a diversity of values that it is absolutely essential for educational administrators to adopt values reflecting a balance between individualism and communitarian good. More importantly, this work shows that superintendents must be prepared to take a stand on crucial value issues affecting the education of children since it is in the field of education that values will be passed on to children.

Theme One: Educational Administration and Its Moral Imperative

Scientific administration stressed the importance of technical rationality in decision-making and problem-solving. What the advocates of scientific administration missed in espousing technical rationality was, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated, that "administration is a complex and pervasive human process [carried out] within an overall context of human values. Values impinge upon and are entwined in every phase of the administrative process and this, of itself, guarantees conflict" (p. 3).

Those conflicts, which can be within the individual, between the individual and the organization, and between the organization and the environment, invariably arise when choices must be made between what is good and what is effective. We are advised by Sergiovanni (1991) that "when the two are in conflict, the moral choice is to prize the former over the latter" (p. 326).

In making the moral choice, administrators must recognize, as Hodgkinson (1983) stated, that "the three irreducible elements of decision are facts, probabilities, and values" (p. 29). Since administration is an enterprise based upon the exercise of power, and one in which decisions are made for and about others, Hodgkinson's (1983) definition of morality as a "concern for others" (p. 29) must be considered a cornerstone of this enterprise.

Therefore, administration, in the words of Hodgkinson (1983), "is a particularly moral activity" (p. 29).

Moral leadership must be exercised by administrators and the basis of this moral leadership is, as Sergiovanni (1991) stated, "normative rationality" (p. 326). Normative rationality is not a force designed to supplant technical rationality--characterized by logic, use of power, specific decision-making strategies, and governed by facts--but rather to complement it. For example, rather than an administrator utilizing bureaucratic authority and power to force someone to do something, or utilizing psychological authority to manipulate a person to do something, normative rationality would provide the reasons for selecting one alternative over another. Reasons for the choice are open for discussion and evaluation by everyone and, to pass the test of normative rationality, the reasons, as Sergiovanni (1991) stated, "must embody the purposes and values that the group shares" (p. 326).

More recently, situational awareness has been recognized as a factor which can heavily influence decision-making and problem-solving. As Foster (1986) stated, "contingency theory has become a dominant intellectual force in respect to organizations in recent times" (p. 127). Contingency theory states there is no one best way to manage an organization and that management is contingent not only upon the products of the organization, but also upon environmental forces such as the market and the political circumstances in which the organization finds itself.

Contingency theory is advantageous in that it relates, as Foster (1986) stated, "the 'right' organizational structure to the type of environment with which the organization interacts" (p. 127). Responsiveness to changing conditions is prized as an administrative activity and management is keyed to changes occurring outside of the organization. Indeed, Morgan (1986) asserted,

> in relation to highly effective problem-solvers and decision-makers, we find that this kind of mystique and power is often based upon an ability to develop deep appreciations of the situations being addressed. Skilled readers develop the knack

> of reading situations with various scenarios in mind, and of forging actions that seem appropriate to the readings thus obtained. (p. 11)

Those deep appreciations, to which Morgan (1986) referred, are inextricably linked to theory, research findings, intuition, and situational awareness. However, Sergiovanni (1991) cautioned that knowledge acquired from the integration of these sources of knowledge "cannot represent a source of authority for action that replaces moral authority" (p. 327). Effective moral leaders realize the limitations on their ability to make accurate predictions and encourage others to recognize this limitation as well. Moral leaders do not decide upon major issues by following solutions advocated by research.

In the field of education particularly, Smith and Blase (1987), cited in Sergiovanni (1991), stated,

> the generalizations of educational inquiry are not epistemologically privileged--they must share the stage with personal experience, a recounting of the experience of others, with philosophical and sociological considerations, and so on. (p. 327)

Thus, we are strongly reminded that research findings cannot be the primary determiner of administrative action.

Influenced by personal experience and the experiences of others, by philosophical tenets and research knowledge and by what is valued, the administrator forms the basis of a normative rationality. Normative rationality influences the practice of leadership in that leaders bring to their job certain biases, prejudices, ways of thinking, personality quirks, and notions of what works and of what does not work. All of these function as personal theories of practice influencing what the leader does and does not do. Normative rationality is thus governed by a strong value orientation, both that of the individual and the group, and is reflected in actions taken to achieve some given end. Thus, values are seen to exert a significant influence on the administrative process for it is these values that give the administrative world its worth.

The Reasons for a Moral Imperative in Administration

Sergiovanni (1991) offered five broad reasons, all of which are infused with the issue of values, for a moral imperative in educational administration:

1. The task of an educational administrator is to transform a school or a school system from being an organization of technical functions into a responsive, adaptive institution which exists not only to get a particular job done, but as an entity in and of itself. In an organizational context, the administrator is concerned primarily with doing things right. In an institutional context, the administrator works with others to articulate and inculcate values providing a distinct identity for the organization. This latter consideration requires that administrators be primarily concerned with doing the right thing.

In a similar vein, Selznick (1957) focused upon the institutional leader as one who is primarily an expert in the promotion and protection of institutional values. Characterized by a concern for the organization as a whole and its self-maintenance, the leader becomes involved in critical areas of the organization such as the development of policy for the recruitment and training of personnel, the representation of group interests in the organization, and the co-operation of the organization with other organizations. Through this active involvement and the subsequent decision-making, the leader inculcates values in the social structure of the organization and shapes organizational character. Bernstein (1959), after reviewing Selznick's (1957) book, stated "leadership goes beyond the attainment of efficiency. Its functions include the definition of group goals, creating an organization capable of fulfilling its mission, and upholding the distinctive aims and values of the organization" (p. 198).

Sergiovanni (1991), however, went further in relation to the concept of creating an institutional value for the school. He cautioned that, in becoming an institution, "a school must move beyond concerns for goals and roles to the task of building purposes into its structure and embodying these purposes in everything it does with the effect of transforming school members from neutral participants to committed followers" (p. 323). Embodying purpose and creating followership through effective leadership, are, in Sergiovanni's words, "inescapably moral" (p. 323).

2. Technical and moral images of administration cannot be separated in practice since every technical decision has moral implications. This is clearly evidenced when decisions are invariably made about and affect people in the organization. Hence, it is crucial for administrators to know whether their actions were indeed right.

Blumberg (1989) advised that administrators must be prepared to judge their own work through the "voices of conscience" (p. 195) which comment on conduct. By exercising reflexive judgment, each of us subjects individual behaviour to criterion measures which have been established for ourselves. Indeed, these criteria often relate to those things considered to be highly moral or those things attached to a moral feeling.

3. Answers to the questions of what to do and how to do it cannot be resolved in a purely objective, rational manner. These answers must be treated as normative assertions, those which we say are true because we believe they are true. Administrators must decide what ought to be the case and this cannot be determined by simply investigating what is the case. As Sergiovanni (1991) noted, "normative assertions are moral statements" (p. 324).

4. The relationships between educational administrators and others are inherently unequal since the administrator has more power than others. While the source of this power stems from hierarchical structures, it also occurs because administrators have access to greater information than do others. Consequently, the relationship between the administrator and the followers is a moral one, wherein the ability to control will not be exploited by the administrator. Also, leadership in this sense is not a right, but rather a responsibility to ensure, as Sergiovanni (1991) stated, that "the competence, well-being, and independence of the follower are enhanced as a result of accepting control" (p. 324).

5. Since administrators have considerable discretion, their jobs provide opportunities for abuse. Simultaneously, this discretion is a necessary requirement for effective leadership. Autonomy provides the opportunity for choice, and without choice, there can be no leadership. How administrators handle this discretion, as Sergiovanni stated (1991), "raises moral issues and has moral consequences" (p. 326).

Moral issues and moral consequences are inescapably linked to values, which are, as defined by Hodgkinson (1983), "concepts of the desirable" (p. 37). Acceptance of this definition would certainly lead to the acceptance of Hodgkinson's (1983) principle that "the truth is that value problems pervade organizations throughout all levels of the authority hierarchy" (p. 36). What this means to the administrator, as a moral agent, is that values such as natural justice, central control and individual and group initiative, freedom, pluralism, and relativism, to name a few, are chosen and imposed upon others. Where competing values impose themselves on the reality of the administrator, the administrator must choose among those competing values, and this choosing is both a conscious and an unconscious process. In choosing, the administrator faces a major dilemma: If science, rationality, and logic cannot deduce the best course of action, which values should govern the choice of ends and means? More importantly, whose values should prevail?

Miklos (1979) advised that "abuses which are possible in educational organizations are restricted to a limited range. However, they may differ only in degree, and not in kind, from those which are likely to attract public attention" (p. 2). He too cautioned us that we should not continue to assume that administrative theory is morally neutral and that what is viewed as effective should not necessarily be equated with what is good.

According to Housego (1991), "those who are the most powerful have their way with respect to the imposition of values in the group, in the community, in the society, in the organization" (p. 19). Thus, the issues of power and its use are compelling reasons for educational administrators to adopt a view that administration carries with it a moral imperative to ensure people in the schools and school system are neither abused nor disabused and that the protection of human dignity is the basis of relationships. Bearing in mind the axiom that power corrupts, administrators must use power judiciously and morally.

This use of power, as was mentioned earlier, makes administration a moral activity which must be tempered with values--hopefully the right values--and techniques of value analysis, not only to resolve value issues, but also to develop a working philosophy of administration which can be applied to the field of practice.

Theme Two: The Work of the Superintendent of Schools

An Orientation to the Discussion

A number of studies, carried out in the past 10 years in both Canada and the United States (Allison, 1989; Boich, Farquhar & Leithwood, 1989; Coleman & LaRocque, 1987; Genge, 1991; Hord, 1991; Leithwood & Musella, 1991; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1990; McLeod, 1984; Musella, 1991; Roberts, 1991) have focused upon the role of the superintendent of schools, the work and/or tasks associated with the formal and informal role expectations of the superintendent, and the effect of the superintendent upon school and school system effectiveness.

Generally, these studies are particularly informative about what superintendents do and some, particularly those of McLeod (1984) and Musella (1991), point to a significant angst experienced by superintendents in their daily lives. It would seem the angst is caused by competing and conflicting demands which are forcing superintendents to make significant changes in their roles.

The Canadian Scene

Within the Canadian scene, Boich (1989) outlined a number of themes which have emerged in terms of the competing and conflicting forces impinging upon the role of the superintendent of schools. These include: (1) centralization vs. decentralization; (2) dual vs. unitary structure; (3) public servant vs. corporate executive; (4) professional educator vs. political manager; (5) external regulation vs. self-determination; and (6) the balance of power with teachers and trustees. Musella (1991) commented on the efficacy of the six themes in understanding issues imbedded in the extent of the change experienced by superintendents:

> These issues, predictably perennial in nature, do provide a sound framework for analyzing the factors that continue to impact upon the role of the CEO [i.e., the superintendent]. [However], it is possible that the generalizations derived from

> these six competing forces may or not be relevant to the various factors affecting a CEO in a particular setting. (p. 4)

In an attempt to determine what changes have taken place in the role of the CEO in Canada, Musella (1991) sent a questionnaire to 110 superintendents and requested them to indicate what changes they have experienced and are experiencing in their current position and what led to the changes. Some 86 responses were obtained and, as Musella (1991) stated, "the content of the responses confirmed the fact that there was considerable frustration with the direction of change that the CEOs were forced to undertake and with the apparently uncontrollable forces causing the changes" (p. 5).

Increasing Politicization of Canadian Education

Responses to the primary question of what changes superintendents were experiencing were categorized by Musella (1991) into the political and administrative areas. Within the political area, superintendents stated that the greater involvement of trustees, the greater numbers of community interest groups in the educational milieu, and the increased level of sophistication and expertise of those with whom the superintendent communicates (parents, trustees, the media, community leaders) have reduced the power and influence of the superintendent and have added more complexity to the human relations dimensions of the job. In the past, superintendents had more authority and credibility and the ability to influence came automatically with the position. As Musella (1991) stated, "now the CEO must 'earn' the ability to influence as much as (or more than) the elected officials [and] the extent of the influence is highly correlated with the political skill of the CEO" (p. 7). Superintendents are now facing a re-ordering of the sources of influence from those traditional sources which included legitimate authority, reward and sanction to referent authority based upon expertise, information and connection.

Also, in relation to the political theme, superintendents indicated they were expected to adopt a more facilitative role to achieve consensus among the various interest groups. The increased questioning of decisions, the increased requests for participation in decision-making, the increased desire for collaboration, and the change of focus from internal decision-making to external decision-making have caused superintendents to change from a mediator to a facilitator, and to change from an authority base to a consensual base in dealing with others. As Musella (1991) stated, "practically all CEOs indicated that political activity of one form or another constitutes a major part of their present role" (p. 7).

The second major area of changes to the administrative role was considered to be significant for superintendents. Formerly, superintendents established system policy and direction, controlled the release of information to trustees, and decided what to do. Generally, these roles were not inconsistent with the expectations trustees had for the superintendents in relation to making decisions in regard to goal setting and policy development and implementation.

In the new scheme of things, superintendents saw their role changing from that of the educational leader to that of a senior administrator. Musella (1991) cited numerous responses from superintendents to illustrate their concerns in this area. Two responses however, are particularly germane to this issue:

> The most significant shift has been from using, and being relied upon for one's educational knowledge to being responsible for legal and financial issues. It is now possible, unfortunately, to go a whole day without having any meaningful educational contact.
>
> Ten years ago the CEO was an educational leader; now a business manager [sic]. (p. 9)

Because of increased paper work, increased demands from all sectors having a relationship with the schools and school system, increased expectations from ministries of education regarding feedback on government initiatives, and increased expectations from the general public that the CEO be a specialist on increasingly complex issues, superintendents see an increased focus on their hierarchical position. Issues are expected to be resolved at the CEO level and this is evidenced by the comments Musella (1991) excerpted from the responses of superintendents to the questionnaire: "Everyone goes to the top these days" and "everyone wants a piece of the CEO" (p. 8).

These issues, which in and of themselves are extremely significant for the superintendents, are made increasingly complex because, as Musella (1991) stated, "all of these administrative demands must take place in a culture which places high value on involvement. Hence, nothing gets done unless everyone is involved" (p. 8). Superintendents are no longer able to unilaterally make decisions and must now use consensus-seeking arrangements which are characterized by extensive consultation and cooperation. Musella (1991) summed up the situation in an admirable manner when he stated, "the CEOs of Canada are saying that they must be more political to be more effective, even to survive. In addition, the administrative aspects of the position require a greater 'fit' with the changing expectations of all the stakeholders" (p. 10).

Reasons for the Role Changes of Superintendents

Musella (1991) concluded "the factors which led to changes in the role of the CEO are not unlike factors that lead to changes in schooling in any setting" (p. 10): historical, economic, political, social, and philosophical. Those superintendents who responded to Musella's (1991) questionnaire focused upon contemporary causes rather than those which seemed to be historical in nature. In the political, economic, and social categories, superintendents were particularly frank with their responses:

> Trustees have taken a much more active role in decision-making in recent years, often devoting more time on their role and actively pursuing administrative roles and school issues. As a result, the CEO has become a "working executive" involved in participatory committees and debate. In prior times, the CEO made decisions and issued rules. (p. 11)
>
> The emergence of trustees as administrators has forced a change in the role of the CEO in most boards. More highly paid trustees are now spending more time in administrative matters and exert a greater role in the daily operation of the board. (p. 11)

McLeod's (1984) study offered findings consistent with the views of the superintendents regarding the amount of time spent in "participatory committees". Protracted meetings, which usually involved large numbers of participants, claimed "approximately one-half to two-thirds of the 50 hours which directors of education [i.e., CEOs and superintendents] averaged at work [in one week]" (McLeod, 1984, p. 175).

Further, McLeod (1984) found "members of the administration constantly 'touch base' with each other to share information and check strategy, especially insofar as it has to do with the process of handling the trustees, teachers, a parent, or members of the public generally" (p. 175). Single issue trustees, the devaluing of the corporate role of the board by individual trustees, and "a lack of respect for lines of authority in the system [by trustees]" (Musella, 1991, p. 11) have forced superintendents to change the nature of their political role. As McLeod (1984) pointed out, "they face too many people with their own axes to grind on issues that do not necessarily pertain to schools. Chastisement of administration, to the beleaguered officials, seems to be an end in itself" (p. 178). However, the changes in the political roles are directly related to broad societal changes occurring within the micro- and macro-environments.

In a societal sense, Musella (1991) noted that pressure on senior levels of government, particularly at the provincial level, have prompted pressures to be passed to local governments. In addition, pressure groups have greater interaction with the board, particularly in relation to those groups who expect schools to deal with their specific social problems. Musella (1991) also noted the pressures can come "simply from the desire of professionals to meet the needs of all the students" (p. 12). One superintendent poignantly explained a point of view in relation to societal change and its effect upon the superintendent's role:

> Education is the new religion--the promise of a better future and the scapegoat for current ills. It is under tremendous scrutiny and pressure. The dynamics of change are accelerating. It is no longer good enough to be efficient and professional. Financial stresses passed down from higher levels of government, coupled with increasing mandates are demanding new responses--new ways of conceptualizing and doing business. (Musella, 1991, pp. 12-13)

Musella's (1991) study clearly pointed out a number of factors serving to change, in dramatic and sometimes painful ways, the roles and tasks of Canadian superintendents of schools. In sum, these factors include the increasing politicization of the community at the board level, the extension of the role of the trustee, the demand for greater involvement of external and internal people in the decision process, the increased demand for more and better information on a greater variety of issues, the increased demands on the educational system to meet the needs of more diverse groups and individuals, the reduced resources with which the school system is expected to meet these needs, and the increased demand for accountability. The superintendent, therefore, has had to become increasingly skilled in political strategies and in working with a wide variety of groups in facilitative and collaborative roles. In addition, the superintendent is regarded less as a leader of people and more as an influencer of people.

Purposes Shaping the Work of the Superintendent

McLeod (1984) offered some salient observations in this regard. Superintendent behaviour was governed by a number of lower order and higher order motivations. Lower order motivations included:

1. The desire to be seen as an official who is approachable by, and accessible and responsive to others.

2. Visibility of the superintendent was prized by those who participated in McLeod's (1984) study. The superintendents participated in numerous public activities, including trustee meetings, conferences, staff functions, and school tours to facilitate a human relations approach.

3. The superintendents feared the consequences of being seen as disinterested, aloof, or ill-informed. Teachers are desirous of being observed in their classrooms even if they are not so pleased with the nature of the evaluative exercise. In addition, the non-attendance at some trustee meetings could be perceived as being illustrative of disinterest.

4. Political considerations are very important and are, as McLeod (1984) pointed out, of a "defensive and an offensive variety" (p. 177). In a defensive sense, superintendents attempt to keep track of and seal off any developments having the potential to harm the administration. In an offensive sense, the superintendent moves quickly to ensure that professional and educative interests in the outcomes of policy development and implementation are protected.

Higher order motivations placed greater emphasis on, as McLeod (1984) noted, "cherished personal ideals for exceptional performance pursuant to quality education . . . ideals which frequently collide with a reality that forces painful compromise" (p. 178). Notwithstanding this potential collision between ideals and reality, superintendents continue to be influenced by higher order motivations:

1. Superintendents, as McLeod (1984) noted, "by way of introduction and without exception, . . . espouse their interest in improving what they perceive as quality education" (p. 178). However, they also asserted that as superintendents, they must safeguard the right of the administration, as McLeod (1984) noted, "to retain control of the organization" (p. 179).

2. Superintendents believe the organization must be supervised in such a manner that disruptions and surprises are eliminated. In this context, the emphasis upon the technical competence of subordinates is matched by the superintendent's desire to develop, in the subordinates, a sense of common purpose which results in higher productivity.

3. Superintendents also operated on the premise that their trustworthiness, commitment, and professionalism were representative of their school board.

4. Superintendents were also motivated from a high level concern for the well-being of their subordinates. Morale and the desire to create a high degree of professional growth among subordinates were seen to be highly desirable in encouraging the subordinates to associate with their leader.

5. Superintendents also operate on the principle that their personal career prospects are heavily influenced by the orderly functioning of the organization as well as by preventing disruptions to the course of the district operations. While the superintendent stands at the top of the world of school board administration, the importance of this position is tempered by, as McLeod (1984) noted, "serious insecurity [which] encourages caution and a general desire that 'things not be allowed to get out of hand'" (p. 179).

6. The credibility of the superintendent is crucial not only in retaining present employment, but also in seeking alternative employment should things go wrong. The record of credibility (i.e., reputation) ostensibly should be achieved by evaluating the year's performance against a set of concrete objectives and the specific completion of tasks. Unfortunately, as McLeod (1984) pointed out, "such qualitative indices do not enjoy widespread currency or legitimacy" (p. 180).

Because of the lack of legitimacy of formal evaluation procedures, the superintendent tends to be judged not so much by what goes right in a system, but rather by what does not go wrong. The office of the superintendent, as McLeod (1984) pointed out, is unfortunately "so conspicuous, moreover, as to make the CEO a lightning rod for political storms arising from various groups dissatisfied with what is happening in schools" (p. 180). As a consequence, the superintendent "is tempted to withdraw behind carefully constructed defenses" (McLeod, 1984, p. 180).

The superintendent not only attempts to cultivate the impression the organization operates under tight controls, but also, as McLeod (1984) stated, "to maintain appearances of normalcy with regard to teaching, curriculum, and evaluation" (p. 180). The outcome of these defensive strategies, predicated upon the fragile credibility of the superintendent, is "that the administrator feels compelled to invest energy in containment and control to such a degree that exceeds the obvious necessity in any organization for efficiency, orderliness, and quality service" (McLeod, 1984, p. 180).

7. The superintendent operates from a dichotomy of images, one of which views the superintendent as a leader, or as McLeod (1984) noted, a "mover and a doer or as a mover and a shaker" (p. 181), and the other, which views the superintendent as a "functionary or a technocrat" (McLeod, 1984, p. 181). In the former image, the superintendent is seen as operating on the cutting edge of progress and change in the field of education. Not only does this person inspire followers, mobilize resources, generate ideas, and perform services facilitating the achievement of the organization's goals, the

"mover and shaker", as McLeod (1984) noted, "exercises power conspicuously. A proactive stance is the hallmark of this kind of leadership" (p. 182). Those movers and doers who suffer setbacks in the achievement of objectives are perceived by people as having lost power or as having exercised power in inappropriate ways.

In the technocrat image, which is, as McLeod (1984) noted, "a dominant prototype for executive behaviour" (p. 182), the superintendent decides the course of events only through the limitations that rationality "places upon the choice and use of means in relation to a given end" (McLeod, 1984, p. 183). While rational strategies, organization charts, bureaucratic structures, rules and policies, and standard operating procedures have significantly assisted in the development of a public education system in this country, they have also created a significant conundrum for the functionary role of the superintendent.

The conundrum, as McLeod (1984) noted, is "the difficulty that arises in establishing consensus with respect to the *socially-desirable ends* pursued by the functionary using the *most rational means* [italics in the original]" (p. 183). Where public will and direction are weak, the functionary can promptly move in to ensure ends are tailored to satisfy rational means. The functionary also acts in an advisory capacity to the school board and can have a pronounced effect by "articulating a range of rational feasible choices for the people who can actually vote to formalize outcomes" (McLeod, 1984, p. 183). Power in these instances is used very unobtrusively, and the functionary, by virtue of the position occupied, can control communication, and agenda while simultaneously offering an interpretation of the issues and the timing for the resolution of those issues.

McLeod (1984) effectively summarized the conflict inherent in this dichotomy of images held by the superintendent and stated "interest is shifted to the appropriate reconciliation that must be sought between the predilection of administration for orderliness and rational allocation of scarce resources on the one hand; and, on the other, that which [is] the politics of interest and the politics of passion--a collision between technocracy and democracy" (p. 184).

8. Within the area of policy development, McLeod (1984) noted "the educational administrator acts as something more than an honest broker between competing interests" (p. 187), thus providing the superintendent with a significant capacity for exerting power and influence. As a functionary in implementing and developing policy, the superintendent can filter and control information, reduce or expand the nature and range of policy options presented to the politicians, fix the timetable for dealing with policy issues, and control agenda.

In addition, the superintendent attempts to shape school trustees in patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking compatible with those of the administration. As McLeod (1984) noted, "while the basic intent of this exercise may be quite honorable, the venture is susceptible to excessive measures that could lead to the impairment of clear, independent judgment" (p. 187).

McLeod (1984) and Musella (1991) have identified the leadership and administrative roles of the superintendent and the motivations which continue to influence, in a direct way, the actions of these superintendents. It is apparent superintendents are affected by motivations which are simultaneously altruistic and selfish, especially in regard to survival, evaluation, and career prospects; professional, especially in regard to the maintenance and improvement of a quality education system; political, especially in regard to influencing, communicating with, and informing others; economic, especially in terms of meeting needs with reduced or static resources; controlling, especially in regards to maintaining the right of the administration to administer; collaborative and consultative, especially in regard to seeking input in the internal and external decision-making process of the jurisdiction; and technocratic or functionary, especially in regard to an advisory capacity where a series of choices are articulated to a political body possessing the power to vote upon formalized outcomes.

The value base of these motivations is reflected in the notion that superintendents pursue socially desirable ends not only in terms of the most rational means, but also in the notion that the processes used to achieve the ends must reflect good and right behaviors. Of equal importance to the superintendent is the notion that the ends being pursued must be right and good, in and of themselves. Indeed, at a minimum, the ends must be socially desirable. The reconciliation of those socially desirable ends with those the superintendent regards as good and right may be either rewarding or painful.

That superintendents experience significant angst and conflict, both internally and externally, over many of these dichotomous and apparently contrary motivations, expectations, and values is not surprising. What is surprising is that superintendents continue to offer and want to offer service in light of these conflicting demands, particularly since the effectiveness of the superintendent is described more in terms of what does not go wrong in a school system and less by what goes right. More importantly, superintendents have been forced, in light of Musella's (1991) findings, to adopt an increasingly political role and a decreasing leadership role.

Both Musella (1991) and McLeod (1984) have provided a qualitative view of the work of the superintendent and some of the underlying motivations of that work. However, a fundamental and unanswered question remains: Why do the people who occupy the position of superintendent act as they do? More importantly, how do superintendents choose between philosophies of instruction, or between a series of goals and objectives, or between evaluation outcomes which effect children, teachers, and the community, or between the needs and goals of the community and the realities of curricular requirements and availability of resources?

Expert Superintendents' Views

Genge (1991) studied 13 "expert" superintendents of schools in Alberta to determine their highest priorities, their educational program priorities, the most important criteria they used to judge the effectiveness of their school systems, the criteria they used to judge their own effectiveness, and the constraints upon their effectiveness. Unfortunately, the study did not delve into the value bases of these superintendents to determine the extent to which values influenced the selection of priorities and formed the basis of their views of effectiveness, both on a system and on a personal level. Notwithstanding this limitation, the results are instructive and can form the basis for further investigation in the area of values and the superintendency.

Genge (1991) found that of three priority areas, those dealing with the system were rated most highly by superintendents, followed by instruction, and personnel. Program priorities, in order of frequency of mention, from highest to lowest, were academic, special needs, social, technological and spiritual. Within the academic area, superintendents placed the greatest priority on the implementation of the programs prescribed by Alberta Education. Within the special needs area, superintendents placed the highest priority on the provision of programs for special needs students. Within the social area, superintendents placed the highest priority on the development of programs to help alleviate social problems. Within the technological area, superintendents placed the highest priority on delivering programs on technology. Within the spiritual area, superintendents placed the highest priority on reflecting spiritual beliefs.

Superintendents also mentioned a number of constraints which affected their behaviours. Genge (1991) found superintendents most frequently mentioned political constraints, time constraints, financial constraints, and oversized agenda constraints as reasons for a reduction in their overall effectiveness. The findings in regard to these constraints, and their effect upon the effectiveness of the superintendent, are similar to those reported by McLeod (1984) and Musella (1991), although the degree of importance attached to these constraints by the participants in Genge's (1991) study is significantly lower than that of McLeod's (1984) and Musella's (1990) respondents.

It is somewhat ironic that in the American milieu, the literature continues to indicate the leadership role of the superintendent, especially in terms of maintaining quality education programs, school reforms and school/system improvement, is more important than the political/administrative role which Canadian boards of education are forcing superintendents to assume. Indeed, the reviews of the American studies have shown little reference to the increasing politicization of education, except in light of the demands by the American public for school reform and school restructuring, that have caused Canadian superintendents to significantly change their roles and associated actions. A reason for this phenomenon could be that the American educational system has gone through the extreme political phase and that superintendents have adjusted to this to such a degree that politics is taken for granted.

Two recent studies conducted in the United States (Hord, 1991; Roberts, 1991) are indicative of the importance of superintendent leadership. These studies provide further insights as to the work superintendents do and the leadership activities in which superintendents are engaged.

Superintendent Leadership

Hord (1991) completed a moderate, but not insubstantial, review of the literature germane to the topic and concluded the review by stating "it seems clear that superintendents can and do demonstrate leadership capacities that target instruction and that what they do appears to correlate with district level performance" (p. 7). In light of these leadership capacities, Hord (1991) noted that instructional leadership "include[s] at least two elements: 1) a focus on instruction; and 2) a focus on improvement that results in change in knowledge, understanding, skills or behaviour" (p. 5). Instructional leadership, in Hord's (1991) opinion, requires the leader be attentive to instruction and that the leader provide resources, personal energy, time, and guidance in change strategies which "enable attainment of the vision of improved instruction" (p. 5).

Using the above definition of instructional leadership as a focal point, Hord (1991) cited five studies (Coleman & LaRocque, 1988; Hallinger, Murphy, & Peterson, 1985; Murphy & Hallinger, 1986; Peterson, Murphy, & Hallinger, 1987; Pollack, Crispeels, Watson, Brice, & McCormack, 1988) which detailed the tasks associated with the educational leadership of the superintendent in effective districts.

Goal Setting and Concomitant Superintendent Actions. Murphy and Hallinger (1986) reported findings about superintendents in 12 districts. These authors found the superintendents set goals and established standards, selected staff, supervised and evaluated staff, established a focus upon instruction and curriculum, ensured consistency in curriculum and instruction, monitored curriculum and instruction, and were heavily involved in, as Hord (1991) reported, "the technical core operations of their 12 districts" (p. 6).

Culture Building, Beliefs in Instruction and Superintendent Actions. In the Hallinger et al. (1985) study, superintendents were engaged in culture building and spent a considerable amount of time and effort in building relationships between the district office personnel and school based administrators. They were also involved in developing and implementing administrative development programs which focused upon curriculum and instruction. Peterson et al. (1987) found superintendents believed that curriculum and instruction were not idiosyncratic and that they could benefit from instructional programs and teaching methods designed to improve student learning.

Beliefs in Collaboration and Superintendent Actions. Coleman and LaRocque (1988) examined the work of superintendents in high performing districts in British Columbia. They found the leadership of the superintendent was the single most important factor in creating a positive district climate and technical and cultural elements contributed to this leadership. In the high performing districts, superintendents used numerous committees for consultative purposes, reached teachers through principals, and encouraged principals to react to ideas. Principals were consulted in setting goals for the school district, in examining and assessing programs and instructional methods, and in developing ideas for the improvement of schools and the district. Superintendents were seen to have a presence in the community and the schools.

Beliefs in Control and Superintendent Actions. In the Pollack et al. (1988) study, superintendents exercised district control over the behaviour of principals through the selection, supervision, and evaluation processes. Superintendents played significant roles in setting goals for change, in articulating district goals, in modeling for change through monitoring and visibility in the system, in developing staff development programs, and in providing on-site assistance for teachers and principals. More significantly, superintendents in the improving districts had a positive effect on the culture of the district by advocating the belief that student achievement could be increased.

Superintendent Leadership Actions. Hord (1991) used the literature to provide a general focus for the instructional leadership tasks in which superintendents were engaged. At issue for Hord (1991) was the degree of importance a sample of 32 Texas superintendents placed on the tasks relative to their success in their positions. To determine the answer to this question, Hord (1991) identified five instructional leadership components from the literature: instructional planning; staffing for instruction; organizing for instruction; human resource development; and evaluating instruction (pp. 11-12). A series of tasks were also derived from the literature and were assigned to the specific leadership components.

The tasks most frequently selected by between 60% and 100% of the superintendents, and which are stated in order of importance, included:

1. Establishes priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives.
2. Supervises and continuously updates the district's goals and objectives to ensure the curricular philosophy of the district is being met.
3. Promotes the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy.
4. Provides an instructional evaluation program that accurately monitors the instructional program.
5. Ensures goals and objectives that satisfy the needs of the local community are established.

Thus, the superintendents perceived that the main components of leadership consisted of instructional planning and the evaluation of instruction. As a consequence, the importance of those tasks should reflect a significant commitment of time, energy, and influence in completing those tasks.

Leadership and Craft Knowledge. Roberts' (1991) study was based on the assumption that superintendents possess significant craft knowledge which was passed on in an oral tradition and which, as a result of this oral tradition, remained untapped by more formal methodology. To make sense of the oral traditions of the craft knowledge, some 81 superintendents in California were asked to identify the ways (i.e., tasks, actions) in which they describe their perceptions and beliefs while they act as instructional leaders in their districts. Through a series of semi-structured discussions and an interpretive review of themes which emerged from the transcribed proceedings of the discussions, the superintendents outlined their instructional leadership tasks in relation to program quality, recruitment and selection of principals, and assessment and accountability. After analyzing the data, Roberts (1991) found that four themes permeated the responses.

1. Emphasis on Symbolic Leadership and Superintendent Actions. In this first theme, the superintendents described the symbolic importance of their role in creating values, priorities and beliefs across all of the topic areas. To facilitate this process, the superintendents believed their visibility should be increased both in the schools and classrooms to create symbolic importance for the instructional process. They also believed symbolic importance for curriculum implementation could be demonstrated by providing principals with articles and other materials on this topic. A third major focus of the superintendents, in relation to values, beliefs, and goals, was reflected in the engagement of principals who demonstrated vision and who shared the vision and beliefs articulated in the school system.

2. Emphasis on Student Learning and Superintendent Actions. The second theme captured the importance superintendents place on focusing on successful student learning and being able to articulate that importance in visionary, strategic, and long range ways which served to empower and motivate others.

Superintendents believed they were responsible for taking the lead in setting priorities and in providing an instructional focus for the school district and that these are to be accomplished by creating and articulating a vision for the school district. Symbolic importance is shown for the vision by meeting with principals to review site goals in relation to the priorities and vision of the district, to ensure a focus on student learning, and by making regular reports to the board on progress made in achieving strategic goals and priorities. The strategic plan is used in developing the budget for the school system and for ensuring the appropriate allocation of funds for targeted areas.

3. Emphasis on the Development of Culture and Superintendent Actions. The third theme identified the importance superintendents place upon the development of a professional and collegial culture based on the concepts of shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability. Within this context, the staff was expected to collaborate in and take responsibility for developing performance standards, setting program goals, developing action plans, monitoring performance, and assuming accountability for reaching performance standards it had set.

4. Emphasis on Developing an Open Organization and Superintendent Actions. The fourth theme stressed the importance of building and shaping an open, information-based organization in which all staff could act responsibly and knowingly because they had access to appropriate information, staff and community opinions, and data. Disclosure of information, policy formulation and implementation, and the production of an annual report were seen as essential activities in this regard.

Summary of Theme Two Literature

Both McLeod (1984) and Musella (1990) have added significantly to the underlying motivations of superintendents in regard to the work they do. McLeod's (1984) work is especially germane to the higher order motivations which cause superintendents to act as "a mover and a shaker or as a functionary or a technocrat" (p. 181). In addition, these authors have pointed out the significant dilemmas of superintendents because "their cherished personal ideals for exceptional performance pursuant to quality education frequently collide with a reality that forces painful compromise" (McLeod, 1984, p. 178). Changes in the political, social, economic, and philosophical arenas have prompted superintendents to change many of their behaviors, especially in regard to the leadership role being subsumed in favor of an increased political or functionary role.

In spite of the necessity to adopt an increasingly political role, superintendents, at least in the United States, are expected to perform leadership behaviour, especially in regard to a symbolic role in the creation of values, priorities, and beliefs in the areas of program quality, recruitment and selection of school principals, and in assessment and accountability. Hord (1991) found superintendents placed great importance upon developing priorities among the district's instructional goals and objectives, supervising and updating the district goals and objectives to ensure the curricular philosophy of the district is being achieved, promoting the development and acceptance of a sound educational philosophy, providing for an evaluation system which accurately monitors the instructional program, and in ensuring goals and objectives are established consistent with the needs of the local community. The vision of improved instruction was seen by Hord (1991) as the basis of the importance placed on each of the previous categories.

Roberts (1991) provided a thematic analysis of the rationales superintendents used to describe their perceptions and beliefs while they acted as instructional leaders in their school districts. Superintendents described the symbolic importance of their role in creating values, priorities, and beliefs in a number of priority areas. Superintendents also indicated a strong focus upon successful student learning and that this focus was articulated in visionary, strategic, and long range ways which served to empower and motivate others. Third, superintendents placed importance upon the development of a professional and collegial culture characterized by shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability. Finally, superintendents stressed the importance of building and shaping an open, information-based organization where all staff could act reasonably, responsibly, and knowingly because they had access to timely and appropriate information.

The work of Coleman and LaRocque (1988) also pointed out the importance of the leadership of the superintendent in high performing school districts in British Columbia, especially in the creation of a positive district climate characterized by collaboration and consultation.

Genge's (1991) study of expert superintendents in Alberta produced findings both consistent and inconsistent with the results of the previous studies. Consistencies were noted in the high priority expert superintendents placed on planning, communicating effectively, and in maintaining good relations with personnel. The highest priorities were placed on issues relating to the school system, followed by those relating to instruction and personnel. Public satisfaction, student achievement, and school evaluation ratings were used to determine effectiveness of the school system. In relation to superintendent effectiveness, experts stated that formal board evaluations and informal feedback from the public, trustees, principals, teachers, and other district office personnel were most important to them.

Surprisingly, the expert superintendents did not see remoteness, lack of contact with the schools, or weak personal links as constraints upon their behaviour. However, they did confirm there were political, financial, time, and bureaucratic constraints which affected their behaviour. These constraints were not seen to be as important to the experts as they were to the participants in the McLeod (1984) and Musella (1991) studies. Further, the expert superintendents did not view aspects of character, such as truthfulness, honesty, credibility, principles, devotion, respect for others, and collaborative/consultative beliefs as significant factors which contribute to superintendent effectiveness. Last, the expert superintendents did not allude to conflicts or dilemmas that they were facing, especially in response to the increasingly politicized nature of education to which both Musella (1991) and McLeod (1984) referred. The place of values in the resolution of such dilemmas is the focus of this study.

Theme Three: Ethical and Moral Dimensions of Decision-making and Conflict Resolution in the Work of the Superintendent

The disciplines of applied philosophy and moral psychology provide significant insight to the dilemmas encountered in examining conduct and values and fundamental conceptions of human relationships, especially as they relate to leadership behaviour, the use of power, and the potential manipulation of people. In addition, the disciplines can be applied to the work of the superintendent and the fundamental motivations which govern this work.

Ethical Principles and Values

In applied philosophy, attention is focused upon the ethical dimensions of behaviour where individuals use moral reasons, moral considerations, and a theory of value to guide not only the selection of means to achieve a given end, but also to guide the selection of the desired or proposed ends. The study of ethics is not only concerned with what constitutes good and right conduct; the study of ethics is also concerned with the provision of reasons for thinking that something or some process or some end or some means is good (Moore, 1903, pp. 1-21). Since actions usually involve and affect others, the concept of good and right behaviour has been tempered with what Kant (tr. 1959) described as a moral imperative, the concept of "ought", wherein conduct is commanded not by the material of the action or its intended result, but by the form and the principle from which it results. In other words, actions are not directed primarily by the consideration of means and ends, but rather by some fundamental principle (i.e., ethical or moral) which reflects the concept of "ought".

Thus, ethical theories explain how things "ought to be" and reasoning associated with those ethical theories is termed "justification " (Robinson & Moulton, 1985, p. 7). Ethical theories are likely to provide different justifications for similar and different problems. In addition, ethical theories are more concerned with explaining why rather than in determining what is right and what is wrong. More importantly, ethical theories assist people in assessing their own theories which form the basis of decisions and judgments.

Robinson and Moulton (1985, pp. 7-8) have provided a set of general ethical principles which they suggest can be used to determine not only the morality of actions, but also to form the bases of major ethical theories. The principles are: (a) The Principle of Fairness; (b) The Principle of Maximizing Benefits; (c) The Principle of Universalization; and (d) The Principle of Treating Others as Ends in Themselves, Not Merely as Means. An explanation for each principle is appropriate, especially in light of the relationship of each principle to morality and ethical theories.

The Principle of Fairness. Those people who are equal in aspects relevant to a particular situation should receive equal treatment. In light of this principle, crucial decisions must be made to determine what aspects are relevant, to determine what counts as equal treatment, to determine what rights are involved, to determine how justice is to be realized, and to determine what people deserve. Thus, the Principle of Fairness requires the extensive consideration of situational imperatives and the judging of what is fair in light of these situational contingencies. Treating all people the same in different situations is not fair, although it may appear to be equal. Implicit in this principle is the notion of impartiality or judging a case on its individual merits.

The Principle of Maximizing Benefits. This principle is characterized by weighing the costs and benefits of an action and deciding who should be considered and what is to count as a benefit (i.e., creating happiness, realizing higher goals, survival). In addition, the individual must determine who gets how much of the benefits.

Robinson and Moulton (1985) indicated the Principle of Maximizing Benefits can conflict with the Principle of Fairness, especially in those situations where benefits may be maximized by treating a person or a group unfairly. In other words, some may be denied benefits so others may receive more. No suggestion was given for the resolution of this dilemma.

The Principle of Universalization. Universalization is related to the moral problem of setting precedence wherein if one person does something, others may want to do it as well. Consequently, all others in a similar situation should be able to do it. Thus, the benefits afforded to one should be afforded to all.

As in the Principle of Fairness, a notion of impartiality must apply so that the decision-maker can determine the aspects of a situation which are relevant to make a generalization. Also, the Principle of Universalization is "applied when an act is generalized very broadly, considering the consequences if everyone (or at least many people) in the relevant situation were to do the act" (Robinson & Moulton, 1985, p. 8). If an act were to be generalized to a person or a small group, consideration should be given to what it would be like if someone did to us what is to be done to them.

The Principle of Treating Others as Ends in Themselves, Not Merely as Means. This principle requires that others are treated with respect and dignity and a recognition that others have plans and desires which require consideration. Moral decisions must consider the interests of the others who are involved, not just oneself. Thus, others are not to be exploited and both sides in a conflict situation deserve to be heard. However, the principle, in and of itself, does not tell us what to do.

Summary of Four General Ethical Principles.

In summary, the four principles look at the consequences of an action (i.e., maximizing benefits or setting precedents) to judge the morality of the action, and they evaluate an action on its own merits (i.e., its intention to treat others as ends in themselves or its fairness). They can converge on the same solution to an ethical problem or they can conflict with one another and lead to different ethical decisions.

It is important to note that while ethical theories assist in the clarification of the aspects of a moral dilemma, they do not tell what action to take in the resolution of the moral dilemma. As a consequence, ethical theories focus upon the various principles rather than on conclusions, and on reasoning rather than on outcomes. The principles also encourage individuals to promote fairness, equal opportunity, justice, and individual freedom, avoid hurting others, set good examples, and not treat people as only means to achieve one's ends. In terms of moral values, the principles should help create a better world in which people are fairer, more just, and more considerate of the needs, wants, and aspirations of others.

For the superintendent of schools, who has significant influence over the structure and daily workings of a school system. decisions which are made sometimes hurt individuals or groups or put them at a disadvantage. Simultaneously, the decisions may be ethically justified. For example, the decision to deny tenure to a probationary member of staff, or to reallocate funds from a program area may indeed cause some degree of pain. However, not to make either of the decisions may be irresponsible or unfair to students, faculty, or the school district. Thus, administrators, such as the superintendent, must often face conflicts between what is advantageous and what is right for people, for their organization, or for the community. The question remains: Are there times when the goals of the institution clash with certain moral values? What is the relation between moral values and educational values and goals? Are educational values independent of or in conflict with ethical goals?

These questions will form the basis of an analysis of what the superintendent does in relation to educational values and goals and how these tasks may very well be at odds with the moral values and/or educational values which the superintendent possesses. The analysis cannot be completed without examining how moral psychology can help to identify some fundamental conceptions of human relationships at the centre of the educational enterprise, and the ethical and moral resolution of conflicts in relationships.

Ethical Dimensions of Relationships Between Superintendents and Others

Earlier in the literature review, Sergiovanni (1991) cited the reasons for a moral imperative in educational administration. Essentially, these reasons clustered around the notions of power, the use of power, and the unequal distribution of power. The inequity in power distribution refers to the ability of educational administrators to direct specific changes; to access, provide, and act upon information which few others have; and to use the considerable discretion which administrators have as a result of the positions they occupy. In relation to this matter of discretion, Rohr (1978) stated, "because public administrators have discretion (help to govern), they are properly accountable to the people, yet they are not elected, so they have an ethical obligation to respond to the values of the people in whose name they govern" (p. 4).

It should be evident there are considerable opportunities for conflict between the administrator and others over the manner in which power is used since the use of power can have a pronounced effect upon the relationships between the administrator and the other players in the educational enterprise. All public administrators, including superintendents, are, as Mainzer (1991) stated,

> properly told, for example: Be morally committed, but be a neutral professional; challenge ill-used authority but be a co-operative organization member; work toward political consensus but resist the politically strong in order to serve the weak who suffer; and be impartial in administering the law [policy] but be humane and caring in exercising authority. (p. 20)

These dilemmas form the basis of the real-life world of the school superintendent and all other public administrators. Deeply embedded in these ethical dilemmas is the notion that the personal response of the administrator to the dilemma is critical since organizational roles, climate, and structure always interact with the personal response to produce certain organizational outcomes. How then, can the administrator judge and evaluate the rightness of the response?

Stewart (1989) suggested three traditional measures have assisted administrators in this judging process: (a) intuition; (b) preference; (c) emotivism. She advised that no one measure is, nor are all the measures, sufficient to determine right action. Stewart (1991) stated that "from an ethical theory perspective, there is a problem with intuitions alone. Hence, professional societies develop codes, professors teach case studies, and agencies formalize numerous rules of good practice for transmission to new employees" (p. 357). She further criticized preference and emotivism together and stated "when reduced to 'preference', one relies for philosophical underpinning on an emotivist approach, which holds that moral utterances cannot be true or false because they simply indicate feelings aroused in a person and do not characteristically assert anything of anything" (p. 359). In other words, describing an action as wrong does not describe properties of that action; rather, it is an expression of feelings or attitudes about that action in an attempt to arouse similar feelings or attitudes in the person to whom the action is explained.

The relationships between the administrator and the other players are based upon the ethical dimensions associated with each of the reasons identified by Sergiovanni (1991) for a moral imperative rather than upon the reasons themselves. Conflict situations arising from the ethical dimensions of the relationships will invariably occur for, as Lyons (1989) stated, "it is through peoples' relationships to others that moral and ethical concerns are experienced and revealed--although individuals may be unaware of them" (p. 6). For administrators, this means they must be aware of the ethical dimensions of their real-life conflicts and have methods in place to deal with them. Stewart (1991) echoed this view and stated, "what is common to all students of administrative ethics is the need to ground administrative action in moral concepts beyond personal preference: Administrators need help in developing a sensitive moral compass that points them in the right direction" (pp. 370-371). This "sensitive moral compass" to guide the administrator in relationships and morality may very well be found in two orientations advocated by Lyons (1989): a morality of justice as fairness; and a morality of care and interdependence.

The Morality of Justice

Kohlberg (1984) offered insight into the dominant model of moral psychology which defines morality as justice, and predicts that the moral conflicts individuals see and construct in their lives center on issues of rights and fairness. In essence, these are conflicting claims between people. Typically, these conflicts are resolved by the individuals involved stepping back from the situation and objectively using the principles of justice to determine both fair procedures and a fair solution. However, people also have "other moral concerns which go beyond fairness and rights and these concerns focus upon whether or not others are taken care of, excluded, or hurt" (Lyons, 1989, p. 13). The morality of justice, while necessary, is not sufficient to address all moral concerns.

The Morality of Care

The deficiencies noted in the morality of justice stem from people wishing to understand more fully the contexts of the individuals involved. Hence, they usually imagine themselves in the situation so that the problem has more meaning to them. Gilligan (1982) indicated the field of moral psychology required the broadening of the concept of morality to include an ethic of care. Thus, two moral perspectives have emerged: the notion that morality is fairness and justice; and the notion that morality should also include the ethic of care.

Application of the Two Perspectives

Lyons (1989) indicated the two moral perspectives incorporate a related set of ideas, which include conceptions of relationships and patterns of thinking, especially as these conceptions and patterns relate to the issues inherent in deciding what becomes a moral problem, how to resolve a moral conflict, and how best to evaluate the resolution for a moral problem. The "sensitive moral compass" to which Lyons (1989) referred requires the administrator to have a disposition toward two moralities: the morality of care; and the morality of justice. These two orientations toward morality should not be considered as mutually exclusive. Rather, they should be viewed as essential considerations when administrators or any individual in a position of power deals with others. At a minimum, the morality of justice should apply. At a higher level, both moralities would be considered. An explanation of how the orientations apply in the resolution of a moral problem is appropriate.

Determining What Becomes a Moral Problem. As Lyons (1989) pointed out, the morality of care rests on an understanding that relationships entail responses to one another in their terms and contexts and that they are seen to be based on interdependence or negotiation. Moral problems thus deal with the relationships or the activities of care. Conflicts in relationships are seen as issues when the ties between people are broken or when relationships are maintained or restored. Moral dilemmas associated with the activities of care centre on the nature of the caring response or the capacity of the response to another within the particular situation being encountered. The dilemmas are typically concerned with how to promote the well-being or the welfare of another, or how to relieve the hurt, burden, or suffering of another, both in physical and psychological terms. The caring response can also be directed at self; in other words, how can one care for oneself when considering the care of others.

The morality of justice, on the other hand, rests on an understanding of relationships based on notions of reciprocity or contractual obligation. Moral problems arising in this category stem from conflicting claims in the relationships between people, from the manner in which one decides conflicts, or from the justification for one's decisions based on the premise that fairness is a goal in the relationships between people. Moral dilemmas associated with conflicting claims stem from the conflict of obligation, duty, or commitment in the differing relationships one has, including self and others, self and society, or to one's own values and principles. Conflicts in deciding come from the need to have some objective, impartial method of choice to ensure fairness in the decision.

Resolution of Moral Conflict. In the morality of care, resolutions to moral conflict are sought to restore relationships or the connections between and among people. Further, in carrying through with the activities of care, it is essential that good will comes to others or that hurt and suffering will be stopped for others or oneself.

In the morality of justice, resolutions to moral conflict are sought considering one's obligations, commitments, or in performing one's duties. Resolutions are also sought in holding to or in not violating one's standards or principles, especially the concept of fairness.

Evaluation of the Resolution of Moral Conflict. In the morality of care, the evaluation of moral choices is made by considering whether relationships were restored or maintained and how things worked out or will work out. In relation to the latter, in some instances the evaluation will have to be based upon the acknowledgment that there is no way to fully evaluate the resolution. With respect to the former, the degree to which relationships were restored or maintained can be determined by the degree of happiness expressed by others, by people talking to each other, or by the degree to which everyone is comfortable with the solution.

In the morality of justice, the evaluation of moral choice is made by considering how the decision was thought about or justified. In addition, the degree to which values, standards, or principles were maintained in the process is a crucial consideration. The manner in which the decision was justified must take into account one's obligations, and duties and one's ability to live up to those deeply felt obligations, principles, and values.

Differing Emphases

In essence, the two concepts of morality differ in terms of the basis of the relationships between people. To paraphrase Lyons (1989), in the morality of care, relationships are seen to be a matter of interdependence and negotiation and are defined by an underlying concern for particular situations and contexts and the well-being of those in the relationship. The relationships are usually considered as long-term, even if they turn out not to be so. Those involved in the relationship are flexible, tolerant of ambiguity, and willing to reformulate or renegotiate the terms of agreement.

The morality of justice, on the other hand, views relationships as a matter of contract or reciprocity and these relationships are defined in terms of duty, obligation, equality, fairness, and hierarchy in interactions. The relationships are mediated by the formal terms of an agreement but this mediation is characterized by fairness between people. Ultimately, the *quid pro quo* existing between the parties can fail if the terms of the contract are not met.

Lyons (1989) argued that operationalizing the two concepts of morality can have a profound effect upon the leadership of administrators who are charged not only with being fair, but also with being caring. Especially in the context of interdependent relationships, Lyons (1989) stated "different expectations, skills, competencies and conceptions of power are required of managers and, importantly, of their employees as well" (p. 19). The morality of caring (i.e., interdependence) views the leader as being interdependent and the morality of fairness (i.e., reciprocity), on the other hand, views the leader as autonomous. Before examining the aspects of leadership in each of these concepts of morality, it is necessary to examine the general relationship of leadership to conflict resolution within the two moralities.

Leadership, Ethical Dilemmas, and Conflict

Mary Parker Follett (1927) examined the nature of leadership and its relation to conflict in the work place. In her view, conflict could be solved in three ways: by domination; by compromise; or by creative integration. Follett (1927) rejected both domination and compromise as methods of conflict resolution. Domination by the use of "power over" implied the imposition and adoption of a resolution due to fear of consequences or the application of sanctions. Thus, solutions were achieved through compliance. The use of compromise as a tool for conflict resolution was deemed equally unacceptable since the term compromise implied giving up something that was valued for the sake of achieving a settlement. Follett (1927) viewed creative integration, a process allowing both parties to the conflict to hold on to what was valued while they sought a new, creative solution, as the right method to achieve agreement.

Follett (1927) advocated "a change in some of our fundamental conceptions of human relationships" (p. 47) and with this alteration, traditional ideas of leadership and the use of power and manipulation would also have to change. By adopting the process of creative integration as a tool for conflict resolution, leaders were not to act as a persuader of others or to acquire the consent of the governed. Rather, the leader was to energize a group, encourage initiative, and draw from each individual the maximum the person had to contribute. Leaders were to acknowledge that they themselves would be influenced by, as well as influencing, others. In relation to power, Follett (1927) stated "[it] is beginning to be thought of by some as the combined efforts of a group. We get power through effective relations" (p. 48).

Lyons (1989) pointed out that Follett's work has been "widely acclaimed, then neglected, and yet from time to time rediscovered" (p. 3) but that at present, the writings have once again resurfaced, especially in examining issues about the relationships between people in conflict and the associated issues of leadership in regard to ethical dilemmas and concepts of morality. The "logics" inherent in the different conceptions of relationships shape approaches to leadership and the consequent actions that leaders take. More importantly, these conceptions affect the leader's construction of problems associated with relationships and the recommendations made to alleviate or resolve the conflicts. Moral and ethical dilemmas are based upon the values held by parties in the relationships and these values and associated issues determine the thinking, decision-making and actions of the leader.

Lyons (1989) has provided an example to show that the ethic of fairness can have very different meanings to different leaders and can, as a consequence, significantly affect relationships with others. In one instance, equity or fairness can be reflected in the collaborative development of a plan that reflects fairness in the distribution of a budget. Fairness could reflect, for example, a distribution ratio between programs to which everyone would agree. The process may involve convincing various people to participate in the development of a budget plan but simultaneously reminding others that the final responsibility for the budget rests with the central office. In this instance, the issues focus less on the notion of fairness and more upon the notion of winning or losing control.

On the other hand, fairness could be achieved through the collaborative involvement of others in the budget process and by having the participants determine how the budget is to be spent fairly. Rather than focusing upon the notion of win-lose, the concept of collaboration becomes paramount and the participants are encouraged to work with central office personnel to do long-term planning as well as to complete tasks at hand.

While the contrasts between the two approaches may not be overly striking, they suggest different elements of priority which the leaders place upon relationships. In the first approach, the leadership personnel strive to keep the hierarchy in place and continue to emphasize the ascendancy of the hierarchy in decision-making and subsequent actions. Decision-making would, in all probability, be unilateral. Notwithstanding the importance attached to the hierarchy and the retention of responsibility for decision-making, the behaviour of the leader is mediated by an ethic of fairness wherein the leader's interactions with group members follow principles and procedures to ensure equitable decisions. In addition, the leader's actions will be governed as though an implied contract is in place--a contract which requires certain actions based on the notion of reciprocity.

The issue is also one of equity in the second approach, but the issue is tempered by a greater notion of collaboration wherein the leader makes decisions about working with others, the degree to which others wish to work with the leader, the long term consequences to relationships from the process used to deal with an issue, and the degree to which others have their hopes, and values considered in the decision-making process. The focus is upon the interconnections between all people in the organization and the long term effects of a decision on all of the members. Relationships are seen as interdependent and the underlying value is for the well-being of all. The notion of equity will be based upon what can be worked out together and equity may very well reflect an unequal distribution of resources based upon the collective will of the group. As Lyons (1989) pointed out, "the issues of interdependence and what is called here an ethic of 'response' or 'care' are paramount: that is, not to jeopardize the relationship with the group, to see them in their own needs as well as those [of the leader and the organization]" (pp. 11-12).

The nature of the morality of care is clearly seen in Piaget's (1932) advice that "apart from our relations to other people, there can be no moral necessity" (p. 22). Thus, morality rests in the connections between people even though people may have difficulty in articulating this belief or in perceiving that situations may be those of an ethical nature.

The relational model, which underpins both of the previous models of morality, does not reflect a disavowal of either autocratic or democratic leadership, but as Follett (1932) stated, "something that is neither, something that is better than either, based neither on equality nor on arbitrary authority" (p. 231). In light of what Follett (1932) termed functional unity, each person within an organization could have an appropriate role to play in leadership and this role could change depending upon the situation. Disagreements, when they arose, could be solved by the application of the concept of creative integration which reflected neither domination nor compromise.

Leadership in the Morality of Justice and the Morality of Care

Within the morality of justice, Lyons (1989) viewed leaders as autonomous but simultaneously concerned with the ethic of fairness. In this context, the leaders would precisely define the terms of the contract existing between them, the organization, and others who were both intra- and extra-organizational. Leaders were to act fairly, argue persuasively, and predict with a great deal of accuracy.

Within the morality of care, Lyons (1989) viewed leaders as highly interdependent, fluid, and ready to adjust. They were to act on particular circumstances, take the long term view, take time, listen sympathetically but critically, and create new options by integrating concerns into new solutions. The ethic of fairness reflected the unique context and situations in which people found themselves and the decisions made by the leader reflected this concept of equity.

Implicit in both of the moralities and their associated leadership skills and competencies is the ability of the leader to define what the ethical issue really is. If an ethic can be considered as a general law or rule which provides a guide for action, specific conduct is required to fulfill the value(s) associated with that ethic. Hence, to adequately deal with ethical dilemmas and problems, the leader must be able to "tease" out the values and unarticulated principles which may be in conflict in particular situations.

To illustrate further, the role of an administrator is bounded by obligations, both formally and informally stated. The objective aspects of the role are reflected in well defined role statements. They are considered to be external obligations and provide structure and continuity to the position occupied. The subjective aspects of roles consist of a subsystem of values which are built around the process of responding to the objective obligations. A role evokes within us all a need to create a value subsystem or a code for living out objective responsibilities in ways compatible with our inner inclinations. For administrators, the value subsystem engenders consistent patterns of behaviour which facilitate the development of trust in others.

A role also carries with it a considerable amount of discretion bounded by ethical standards and a degree of sensitivity to others. To make decisions, using both the formal or objective component and the subjective component, the administrator needs to determine not only the individual and personal values and principles governing the action, but also to determine the values and principles of the organization and the people with whom the administrator comes in contact. This process implies a "functional rationality" or, as Lyons (1989) termed it, a "logic" (p. 25) of relationships to foster an understanding of actions in their own and others' behaviour. The process is made somewhat more difficult in that the roles played by an administrator or leader are relative to time and place since the administrator must, within the morality of caring, consider the unique context and situations in which relationships are found and be able to be flexible, and unconstrained by the limitations of time and vision.

The adoption of Lyons' (1989) "logic" of relationships implicitly requires a belief that reasoning leads to ethical action and further, that unethical action may very well signal inadequate reasoning. As Williams (1985) stated, in relation to the limits of non-religious ethics, "it might turn out that we are committed to an ethical life because we are rational agents" (p. 29). Although it would be wrong to believe that knowing what is right would always lead to ethical action, a rational and logical view of relationships based upon moral principles would allow administrators to make moral decisions in particular situations by the application of those principles and by the assessment of the competing claims of others.

An illustration of how "functional rationality" or "logic" in relationships combines with subjective role considerations can be obtained from an analysis of the collaborative mode of decision-making which characterizes the interdependent notion of the morality of care. An administrator who adopts or ascribes to this type of leadership model accepts the formal or logical role expectation of collaboration. Other subjective notions such as the values or principles of shared control, time, fluidity, and the need for re-negotiating terms are imbedded in the formal role expectation. Should the latter value issues not be adequately considered, the participants in collaborative decision-making may view the process as little more than one of manipulation.

The concept that "moral necessity" is inherent in relationships between people should cause administrators to be very aware of the ethical dimensions of their leadership. Administrators may be familiar with the issues of justice, fairness and rights but they may be simultaneously unaware of the issues of care and interdependence and their associated skills, values, and competencies. This is made clear when consideration is given to the notion that decision-making within the morality of care reflects, as Lyons (1989) stated, "an epistemology of problem-solving . . . [where] all participants share in the relevant knowledge or data bases, engage in hypothesis generating and testing, as well as in decision-making" (p. 28).

Values and Morality

Hodgkinson (1983), Leithwood and Steinbach (1991), and Immegart (1988) have pointed out the need for an examination of values in relation to the work that administrators do. Lyons (1989), Stewart (1991), and Follett (1929) have indicated the need for a sensitive moral compass to guide administrators as they choose actions, make decisions, and, through a reflective process, evaluate both.

Hodgkinson's (1983) Values Paradigm is based on the assumption that administrators operate primarily from a Level II perspective wherein value concerns are of a consequential or a consensual nature. Implicit in this statement is the view that few administrators are cognizant of deeply held principles, religious considerations, or ethical and moral dimensions when they make decisions. The work of Lyons (1989), Stewart (1991) and Follett (1929) points to the necessity of moving beyond a modal level of morality as justice or fairness and viewing the administrative enterprise as one which is interdependent, based on relationships with others, and takes into consideration the effect of actions on those interdependent relationships. While Hodgkinson's (1983) Values Paradigm is necessary to begin thinking abut the relationship of values to administrative actions, it is deficient in one major respect: It does not deal with the power administrators have over others and the consequent ability to direct, through various means, the actions others take.

If we accept Hodgkinson's' (1983) view that administrators operate from the Level II perspective because of pragmatic and utilitarian reasons, ostensibly to affect the greatest number of people with the greatest good, then on what basis do administrators assess their actions? A further weakness emerges in Hodgkinson's typology since he classifies the philosophical orientation of intuition within Level I, which is grounded in principle.

Clearly, to defend such a statement is difficult, since the attacks on intuition and emotion, by other writers in the field of values and ethics, indicate these are very deficient in providing the basis for reflective behaviour. Arguably, intuition and emotivism are necessary components of decision-making and assessment of actions since craft knowledge provides a basis for the formation of intuition, but they cannot be viewed as necessarily sufficient components.

Leithwood and Steinbach (1991), on the other hand, have provided a classification of values potentially useful to administrators and extends beyond Hodgkinson's (1983) paradigm in a number of critical areas. First, Leithwood's and Steinbach's (1991) model places greater emphasis on the relationship of the administrator to others within the organization and recognizes that the morality of justice is one necessary component of administrative values. Unfortunately, this strength is also one of the weaknesses of the model since it does not recognize the morality of caring. A second strength of Leithwood's and Steinbach's (1991) model is the interrelationship of professional and social and political values to human and moral values. While Hodgkinson (1983) would attribute these values to pragmatism and utilitarianism, they are more indicative of principles deemed to be desirable in solving problems and making decisions.

Finally, Leithwood's and Steinbach's (1991) model recognizes a base and very fundamental value administrators possess: Survival. It is certainly desirable and expected that administrators would be altruistic, giving, caring and respectful of others, and conscious of the effect their actions have on others. It is equally desirable that these actions are viewed in terms of their continued employment as an administrator. Indeed, it is possible to view the protection of self in a positive manner since proscriptions on one's behaviour should be set by the individual rather than by an external body or because of fear of sanctions.

The Ethical and Value Dilemmas of Superintendents

Superintendents are now cast into the position whereby a distinction between facts and values must be admitted. While facts, as Housego (1991) noted, "can be labeled either 'true' or 'false' in accordance with logical or empirical analysis", values "can never be true or false, only good or bad, right or wrong" (p. 7). Superintendents must recognize that values are chosen and imposed, and where they must choose between competing values, "they face and make moral choices" (Housego, 1991, p. 7). The literature dealing with the work of the superintendent has shown that superintendents, particularly in the Canadian scene, must make value judgments in the areas of organizational improvement, educational progress, instructional improvement, quality teaching and instruction, efficient management, effective policy-making, clear decision-making, good politicking, and the relation of education to the welfare of society, community, and the individual. That the superintendents have been forced to adopt an increasing political role, both to survive and effectively exercise power and influence, is not surprising given the economic, political, philosophical, and historical conditions of the fabric of Canadian society.

While superintendents have been forced to adopt an increasingly political role, they have also indicated they still ascribe to a number of higher order motivations which place priorities on the education of children and on the well-being of subordinates, trustworthiness, commitment, professionalism, the development of a common purpose in the school system, and on retaining control of the organization (Musella, 1991; McLeod, 1984). These higher order motivations could be cast in the category of leadership, and are reflected in the principles of ethics and the moralities of care and of justice which were enumerated earlier in this review. Notwithstanding the higher order motivations held by the superintendents, the Canadian polity, as described by Bibby (1990), continues to degrade the higher order motivations and actions in favor of those which can be characterized, in a base sense, as excessively political.

The plurality of values, which characterizes our society today, makes it extremely difficult to establish legitimacy for any administrative action. As a result, there is significant contention among values and, more importantly, among those who espouse differing values. Further, the establishment of a unified value structure which can serve as the foundation for any complex social order is highly unlikely. Obviously, the very nature of our society and the multiplicity of values held by groups, communities, organizations, and individuals virtually guarantees conflict over the ends and means of action. Housego (1991) suggested that "if [groups, communities, organizations, and individuals] are to survive and flourish, social control is a requirement so that social progress is possible" (p. 14).

Thus, in the absence of a cohesive, commonly held value system, the superintendent of schools, as a leader, must be prepared to articulate a value system which can serve as a guide to the school system and must be prepared to involve others in sharing those same values. In relation to Housego's (1991) advice regarding social control, the superintendent must be prepared to take a stand on defining organizational values and ensuring these values are upheld. It is in light of the necessity to take a stand that the superintendent encounters a major ethical and moral dilemma: To what extent do those in power enforce their will and values on others by coercion versus acquiring the consent of the governed to pursue specific actions in light of values which have been articulated and deemed to be desirable? Second, as Housego (1991) asked, to what extent do the superintendent and the board balance the two extremes "such that social cohesion is secured but not at the expense of individual and group initiative which are necessary for social progress" (p. 15)? Third, which concept of morality, the morality of interdependence (caring) or the morality of reciprocity (justice) and which ethical principles (Fairness, Universalization, Maximizing Benefits, Treating Others as Ends Unto Themselves) dominate the decision process?

Housego (1991) pointed out that other dilemmas are imbedded in those which were previously identified. In the first instance, favoring the interdependent model of morality in which consent of the governed binds the membership to the leadership, it is necessary to ask "in any school system or individual school, how likely are the governed to give their consent on all matters at all times" (p. 16)? In the second instance, Housego (1991) noted "in school settings, typically the leader is in his/her position because he/she represents or embodies some external purpose and is in place specifically to ensure which values are to be served" (p. 16). Being aware of Selznick's (1957) admonition that "the institutional leader is to promote and protect institutional values" (p. 198), superintendents must accept and articulate their own values and the values of the institutions they represent. They must also accept the specific responsibilities implicit in those values. These include, as Selznick (1957) stated, "the definition of group goals, creating an organization capable of fulfilling its mission, and upholding the distinctive aims and values of the organization" (p. 198). Thus, superintendents face the dilemma of ensuring the decisions made in these areas, and which commit others to specific courses of action, must be the right decisions based upon the right values of the educational enterprise. The question remains: Which values are the right values of the educational enterprise? Secondly, in which crucial areas are these values made manifest?

The Values of the Educational Enterprise

Housego (1991) advised that the predominant values which have given shape to the education system in Canada for the past 75 years are those of liberty and equality (p. 18). Liberty was defined as freedom of choice and equality defined as equality of opportunity. Recently, the values of efficiency (i.e., getting the most for the money) and excellence (i.e., getting a high quality product) have made significant inroads into educational thought.

With regard to the values of liberty and equality, Housego (1991) noted significant questions are being asked at a provincial level about the "proper balance between *choice* (liberty) and *constraint* (equality) [italics in the original]" (p. 18).

Freedom of choice, typically championed by those on the political right as the main value for the governance of education, can be likened to the free market metaphor. On the other hand, the value of constraint or equality of opportunity, typically championed by those of the political left, can be likened to the bureaucratic metaphor. Weaknesses are found in both and Bredo (1987) made this abundantly clear:

> A market approach, for instance, focuses attention on individual interests while ignoring collective interests. It looks at how individuals pursue their private interests and assumes that this private pursuit will also advance the public interest. (p. 74)

In relation to the bureaucratic metaphor, Bredo (1987) stated,

> a bureaucratic approach adopts the opposite view, focusing on collective interests while leaving individual interests in the background. It seeks the best plan for attaining collective, organizational goals. Here it is implicitly assumed that the optimal solution to a collective problem will leave individuals better off. (p. 74)

Of the two conflicting views, it would appear that neither has served society very well. In the former approach, concepts of equality, social justice, and the common good are subsumed in favor of the values of liberty, choice, excellence, and efficiency. Utilitarian and self-interested individualism take precedence over distributive ends and the values associated with personal rights, public good, and the sense of community.

In the latter approach, concern for the common good denies the worth and desirability of individual interests. Indeed, the relationship of the individual to the community is subsumed in favor of the collective good. Political rationality is not tempered by moral restraint nor typically do groups who influence the policy process recognize limits on their own immediate claims.

Bredo (1987) suggested that the value of community is to be preferred to either of the two previous value options. The communitarian tradition, based upon an organic linkage between the individual and society, would allow for both private, autonomous action and public planning and constraint. As Bredo (1987) stated,

> a fuller exploration of the metaphor of community . . . may provide a salutary corrective to the unilateral stance of the market and bureaucratic metaphors. [The metaphor of community] places both of these in a different light, making neither an end unto itself. (p. 76)

Thus, the value of communitarianism should become the primary value in the educational polity and should recognize both equality (i.e., control and constraint) and liberty (i.e., freedom of choice) as both necessary and desirable values, not as ends unto themselves. Unfortunately, Housego (1991) advised that

> in schools and school systems as well as in the larger society of Canada, the commitment of those who are in positions to make authoritative decisions have recently valued *freedom of choice* to the point that the brother values of elitism and competition are destroying what I believe is the essential value of *fraternity* (community) implying the sister values of cooperation, compassion, and compromise [italics in the original]. (p. 20)

Educational administrators, particularly superintendents, should, therefore, strive to both promote and protect the fraternal, communitarian values. Community and collective values are absolutely necessary if the values of individual and group freedom are to be achieved. Housego (1991) and Bibby (1990) strongly emphasized that if the school setting does not provide the fraternal values and communitarian values to children, there is little chance that they will be exposed to them anywhere else since neither the institution of the family nor of the church is strong enough or pervasive enough to inculcate such values on a broad basis in society. Housego (1991) further advised that "if the values which emphasize individualism and freedom of choice predominate in the extreme, then the need to assert severe authoritarian control will eventually emerge" (p. 21).

The communitarian ideal reflects a balance between altruism and egoism, between social control and individual freedom. Housego (1991) suggested the key to this balance is "a moral code made up of a *public and a private* component [italics in the original]" (p. 22). The public component is characterized by a duty and an obligation to one's neighbor and performance of public duty. The private component is characterized by the pursuit of private excellence; in essence, being the best one can be. Both of these components are necessary, in the views of Housego (1991), to prevent the establishment of an authoritarian system to keep order.

We are further reminded that the greatest single threat to the establishment of a communitarian value is "the predominance of egoistic individualism refusing to recognize the importance of social and moral responsibilities" (Housego, 1991, p. 22). Bertrand Russell (1948), writing shortly after the cataclysm of the Second World War, made an even more eloquent statement in regard to civic and personal morality: "Without civic morality communities perish; without personal morality their survival has no value. Therefore, civic and personal morality are equally necessary to a good world" (p. 70). Educational administrators, particularly superintendents, must be prepared to accept the challenge of articulating and inculcating the communitarian values in their school systems. The morality of care, which saw the leader as being interdependent with all others in the organization, provides a similar point of view. Complemented by the principles of ethics, the superintendent has the means to deal effectively with the conflicts which will occur in the school system in the policy, service, and administrative/management domains where values are made manifest.

A Summary of the Literature: The Manifestation of Values in Various Domains

The literature review has shown superintendents are becoming increasingly political, not only to get the job done, but also to survive. As a consequence of the increased politicization of education, superintendents have adopted more and more of an administrative/managerial role and less and less of a leadership role. This is evidenced by the degree to which the public, teachers, trustees, provincial governments, and school principals expect the superintendent to be a specialist in an increasing number of complex issues. Secondly, the literature showed that superintendents are becoming increasingly involved in more and more issues which, in the past, would have been resolved at another level in the administrative hierarchy. Superintendents have also indicated there must be a greater "fit" between the superintendent and the changing expectations of all of the stakeholders in the educational enterprise.

Superintendents must subscribe to and act in accordance with the notions of collaboration and facilitation but they are simultaneously expected to remain in "control" of the organization by articulating a vision for the organization which focuses on the instruction of students, by meeting the needs of the community, implementing mandated curricula and programs, ensuring accountability through evaluation and monitoring, doing more with fewer resources, and developing policies which reflect efficiency, excellence, and the value of individualism while simultaneously protecting the public good and the right to administer the organization. More importantly, all of the tasks are to be subject to the moralities of caring and justice.

In attempting to articulate and inculcate both individual and organizational values, the superintendent is likely to encounter significant value conflicts, the resolution of which must be achieved not through demagoguery, nor through compromise, but through the process of creative integration to facilitate a win-win situation as opposed to win-lose, lose-win, or lose-lose in the high stakes game of values.

Given the state of Canadian values which emphasize freedom (i.e., freedom of choice), individualism, pluralism, and relativism, little room exists for the superintendent to establish "values legitimacy" for any administrative action. The conflict between ends and means is virtually guaranteed with the potential outcome being a reliance on social control to facilitate social progress in education (i.e., mandated behaviour through rules defined in policy). However, the absence of truths in the Canadian polity, which would otherwise serve to coalesce and unite the public, at least in terms of educational values, does not and cannot absolve the superintendent from taking a stand on moral, ethical, and value issues.

The central thesis in this review is that administration is inevitably concerned with what is good and right at the same time that administration is concerned with efficiency and effectiveness. Goodness in administrative practice cannot be determined solely by theory and research and, as Sergiovanni (1991) stated, "goodness is not something one discovers but something one decides" (p. 16). The basis of this decision process is the value base held by the administrator.

In this context, administration must be viewed as "philosophy-in-action" (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 2) and this is clearly reflected in the concept of the moral imperative in administration.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

General Considerations

Immegart (1988), in a particularly insightful review of the studies dealing with educational leadership, noted "one of the most curious things about leadership research is the . . . mentioned reliance of researchers on reputational and questionnaire approaches, even in attempts to study leader behaviour" (p. 270). As a consequence, the data obtained are "not defensible in studying leader behaviour, particularly in the sense of trying to ascertain what leaders actually do" (Immegart, 1988, p. 270). This point is supported by Leithwood and Steinbach (1991). Hence, the need, as Immegart (1988) noted, is to investigate and collect data about "actual leadership situations [and] to systematically accumulate a large number of incidents portraying actual examples of leader behaviour and leadership situations" (p. 270). Two questions arise in regard to Immegart's advice: (1) what variables of leadership require examination; and (2) how this can best be accomplished, particularly since the goal is to understand and bring to light aspects of leader behaviour?

The literature review dealt extensively with the recognition of the importance of the value base of superintendents in determining not only what has to be done, but also how things can best be done in light of "good and right" behaviour. Immegart's (1988) comprehensive review of studies of leadership in education has shown that some variables of leadership behaviour have been examined extensively and others not at all:

> Unfortunately, some variables have been pursued endlessly (e.g., initiating structure and consideration, or satisfaction), and others have been almost totally ignored (e.g., cultural and environmental aspects of situations or the motivation and goals of the leader). (p. 271)

Thus, the "doing" of administration and the "why" of "doing" become much more important in the context of research than is the determination of the "what" that leaders are presumed to possess. A form of naturalistic inquiry wherein the educational administrator is asked to outline what has been done and to explain why something was done seems highly appropriate. Immegart (1991) noted,

> naturalistic approaches warrant attention in this regard . . . . If leadership is invoked or if leading is attempted in order to get something done, then the leader's goals or what the leader wants to get done, his or her values and motivation as well as what is done by the leader . . . all seem to be important for inclusion in the conceptualization of the phenomenon. (p. 273)

This study explored the nature of the values that superintendents possess and the effect of those values on decision-making and problem-solving as they accomplish tasks and motivate others to accomplish tasks in the educational milieu. A hermeneutical approach was selected as the method of choice in this study. The application of this research methodology to the study is developed in the following section.

Study Design

During the literature review, it was readily apparent values and their manifestation in the work of administrators are phenomenological in nature and peculiar to the individual and situations. Secondly, the review of the phenomenological literature lent credence to the importance of gathering experiential material such that an understanding of, rather than explaining and predicting about, values and their relationship to superintendent problem-solving and decision-making could occur. Due to the number of areas in which values could influence the work and leadership of the superintendent, the researcher sought to gain insights into particular aspects of that work and the leadership associated with that work. These particular aspects included decision-making and problem-solving in relation to mission, goals, success, policy development and implementation, and the resolution of value conflicts in the political arena.

Research in the interpretive paradigm deals with traditional aspects of philosophy: ontology; epistemology; and axiology. From an ontological perspective, the interpretive paradigm acknowledges there are multiple constructed realities which require an holistic approach to studying any phenomenon. In this study, emphasis was placed on the subjective experiences of eight superintendents of schools regarding the values they hold and which, in turn, serve as the basis for decisions they make, problems they solve, and the actions they take.

Epistemologically, the interpretive paradigm recognizes that the knower and the known are inseparable. Consequently, interactions between the researcher and the study participants was such that each influenced the other during the study. Understanding was achieved through the relationship existing between the researcher and the study participants during the data gathering and data analysis phases of the study.

Axiologically, the interpretive paradigm recognizes that inquiry is value-bound by the inquirer, by the choice of the interpretive paradigm itself as the philosophical orientation of the study, by the theory, and by the context of the study. In this study, the values of the researcher were those which related to education, the experiences of the researcher in various educational administrative positions in general, and the experiences as a school system superintendent in particular. The selection of the primary research question for the study reflected the researcher's basic view that logic and rationality, while necessary for effective decision-making and problem-solving for superintendents, were not necessarily sufficient for those tasks. Consequently, the researcher sought to understand, rather than predict, the values of practicing superintendents of schools.

Interview Development

In-depth interviews were chosen as the primary research strategy in the study. The schedule of interview questions is found in Appendix A. These crucial areas were elaborated upon through the discussion of critical incidents. Participants had the opportunity to reflect upon their comments during the interview through questioning techniques reminiscent of Van Manen's (1991) advice that experiences be explored to the maximum. During those times, the participants provided an elaboration of their initial responses and had the opportunity to ensure their initial comments were appropriate.

The work of McLeod (1984) and Musella (1991) indicated superintendents were experiencing conflict between their increasingly political role and the traditional role of educational leadership. The work of Follett (1927, 1932) and Lyons (1991) demonstrated a concept of moral leadership which stressed the importance of interdependence in relationships and the need for different strategies to resolve conflict. Specific interview questions (Appendix A) were developed to reflect the increasingly political nature of the role of the superintendent and the methods used to solve value conflicts occurring within the political context of their work. Participants were asked questions such as "how do you seek agreement and support from the stakeholders in the school system, especially at the political level (i.e., Board of Trustees)?" Participants were also asked to provide specific examples in their responses so that a greater understanding of the issues could be achieved.

A single interview schedule was completed that could be used for all participants. The schedule was flexible enough to allow for the exploration of issues and instances arising during the interview. The final interview questions could be categorized into four distinct, but highly interrelated areas: (1) values in decision-making and problem-solving; (2) value conflicts and the resolution of those conflicts; (3) political influences which effect superintendents and the methods used in developing interdependencies within the political process; and (4) methods and criteria used by superintendents in evaluating the rightness of actions taken with regard to specific situations and contexts. In developing these overarching themes, it was felt the interview questions could be completed in one interview which would last approximately two hours. The themes also provided a structure for evaluating the "richness of description" in the interviews.

Pilot Study

A pilot study of the interview questions and method of data collection was conducted with two doctoral students in educational administration. Both of these individuals were practicing senior educational administrators but on sabbatical leave from their school jurisdictions during the 1991-92 school year. These pilot interviews provided valuable insight to the researcher in a number of crucial areas including the length of time the interviews would take, the appropriateness of the questions in probing incidents in which strong value issues were involved, and in developing preliminary themes which would facilitate the data analysis. In addition, the researcher was provided with valuable feedback on interviewing style and involvement while the interviews were being conducted. A critique was shared with the dissertation advisor and changes were subsequently made in the formal data gathering process to reflect the feedback obtained.

Participants in the Study

Ten practicing Alberta school system superintendents were invited to participate in the study. Of the ten who were invited to participate, nine very promptly and readily agreed to do so and of those, eight participants were ultimately involved in the study. The months of September and October, 1992, were very busy ones for these superintendents given that school opening had just occurred, trustee elections were to be held during late October, and Alberta Education had initiated a number of meetings with superintendents and Board Chairs to discuss the new "Fiscal Realities" facing the Alberta government in general and the financing of education in particular. Despite these heavy work demands and a general feeling of a lack of security because of the forthcoming election, the participants made the researcher feel very welcome and gave willingly of their time. The researcher traveled to the school district offices in a variety of locations around Alberta. Participants in the study were all superintendents in school districts and divisions, represented both Catholic separate and public jurisdictions, and had an average length of experience as a superintendent of slightly less than eight years. In the interest of confidentiality, only approximate sizes of jurisdictions were cited in the data analysis.

Initial contact with the participants was through a formal letter (Appendix B) advising the individuals of the purpose of the study. A copy of the completed and signed Ethics Review Document (Appendix C) and a Letter of Intent to Participate (Appendix D) were also included in the package sent to each participant. Self-addressed, stamped return envelopes were provided for the return of the Letter of Intent to Participate.

The interview schedule was developed according to the times the participants had available, as they indicated in their Letters of Intent to Participate. In two cases, the interviews had to be rescheduled to accommodate the work and health demands of the participants. Telephone contact with each participant occurred in the week prior to the scheduled interview to ensure the proposed time was still convenient. Each expressed interest in the study and agreed to provide the researcher with documents relating to strategic and operational plans, priorities, and mission statements for their respective school jurisdictions.

Last, it is imperative to note each of the participants was personally known to the researcher for a range of time from seven to 18 years. This personal relationship was viewed as essential in this study since the topic of the study and the incidents requested in the data gathering required a great deal of trust in the researcher by the participants. Indeed, one of the criteria for the selection of the participants was the personal relationship that the researcher had with potential candidates. All participants were informally asked if the existing relationship between the researcher and the participant affected, in any negative way, the acquisition of data. Without exception, the participants indicated the relationship was crucial in deciding to participate in the study, in describing incidents occurring in their jurisdictions which were illustrative of the area being discussed, and in trusting that the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses would be respected. One participant specifically requested comments made about the relationship between the researcher and participant be tape-recorded in the event the relationship may seem to have biased the data.

None of the eight interviewees was hesitant in sharing individual beliefs, stories, thoughts, values, or comments. All said they were looking forward to receiving a transcript of the interview to see if there were any further comments which could have been made during the interview. The researcher did not receive any requests from the participants to have comments struck from the transcribed record or ultimately from the final data analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a series of in-depth interviews. As was previously mentioned, the interviews addressed all twelve of the questions found on the interview schedule. The interviews were structured to allow the researcher to acquire some basic demographic data, which served two purposes: (1) to get the participants talking about themselves and the environment in which they worked so that a comfort level could be achieved in the interview process; and (2) to establish a base for defending the credibility of the participants as they describe events, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and values related to the experiences they have had while performing the duties of a superintendent of schools. The primary data collecting activity for the study, the in-depth interview, was both structured and unstructured. With regard to the former, a number of questions had been developed to ask each participant and these formed the basis of each interview. With regard to the latter, participants were encouraged to provide information from their own perspective, in their own words, and related to the situations and contexts in which they worked. Superintendents were asked to provide documents relating to the mission, plans, and goals for their school jurisdictions and the interviewer had the opportunity to review these immediately prior to the formal interview. By reviewing the documents, the interviewer was able to speak more knowledgeably about specific plans and missions when the interview took place.

At the outset of the interview, participants were given the question sheet along with an orientation to the purpose of the study and a model of leadership developed by Immegart (1988) which showed how values and ethics interact with a number of situational and contextual variables in influencing leader actions, directions, and results obtained. Immegart's (1988) model provided the linkage between values and the work that superintendents do. Thus, the interviews were focused on specific situations rather than on an abstract debate of how values were defined and what specific values the participants held.

The interviewer read the introductory comments and participants were asked if they had any questions prior to beginning the formal interview. The interviewer drew the attention of the participants to the Letter of Intent to Participate, asked once again if they were able and willing to provide data, and reassured them of confidentiality and anonymity. All were asked if they would be willing to participate in a second interview if clarification and exploration of issues were required and all readily agreed, subject to suitable scheduling. Finally, the interviewer indicated that the transcripts of the interview and the story developed from the interview would be sent to each participant for review. One participant asked for a copy of the tape recorded interview as well so that transcript and tape could be reviewed simultaneously.

In the interview, all questions were asked of each participant. The participants were free to respond to the questions as they saw fit and were encouraged to provide examples to the extent they deemed appropriate. In a number of instances, the inquirer offered personal experiences to prompt further discussion on particular topics. Hermeneutic research requires that the researcher be a formal part of the process in which "knowing" and understanding are sought. Hence, the interviewer felt offering personal experiences and insight was advantageous to the participant in clarifying points, developing examples, and in critically assessing their actions in which values and/or value conflicts were involved. Just as importantly, the interviewer was able, through this involvement, to keep the participant oriented to the matter at hand.

Data Analysis

Data obtained in the study comprised eight sets of transcribed material from a set of interviews. Interview data obtained during the pilot interviews were also tape recorded and transcribed. In addition, the researcher used a mini-tape recorder to record observations made while examining documents relating to operational and strategic plans and the mission statements for the various school jurisdictions in which the superintendents were employed. Each of the interviews, including the pilot interviews, was approximately two to two and one-half hours in duration and produced over 60 pages of transcribed material. Material obtained while examining documents was not transcribed since the researcher felt that oral-aural material was sufficient for the analysis and copies of the documents were given to the researcher.

The first phase of the data analysis occurred immediately after the pilot interviews and after each of the subsequent interviews. The researcher immediately replayed the taped material, often on the return trip home, to identify themes which could be used to interpret the conversations of the participants. A short synopsis of each interview was written as soon as possible after the interview so the themes emerging during the playback of the tapes could be directly related to the conversational material. Interpretive research depends, to a large extent, upon a thorough knowledge of the data obtained in the interviews. The researcher was very conversant with the material as a result of the playback of the tapes and the writing of the synopses of the interviews. In analysing the data the researcher used an eclectic analytic process which used three techniques advocated by Van Manen (1990).

The first method, termed "wholistic or sententious" (Van Manen, 1990, pp. 92-93), involved examining the text as a whole and asking "what sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or *main significance of the text as a whole* [italics in the original]" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93)? The meaning was then expressed by formulating such a phrase. In this approach, the fundamental or overall meanings of the text was heavily based on the judgments of the researcher and the experiences the researcher had as a superintendent of schools. This somewhat idiosyncratic analytic method required that a set of stories, drawn from the "hard copy" transcripts, be drafted to facilitate exegetical analysis.

A second approach, termed "selective or highlighting" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93), was also used in the data analysis. This approach was characterized by both reading and listening to the text, by way of the tape recording, a number of times and asking "what statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly *essential or revealing about the phenomenon or* *experience being described* [italics in the original]" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93)? Statements in the transcribed text were underlined, or highlighted and finally isolated. Through a "key word" search on each transcript using a word processing program, the researcher was able to isolate key words and then to seek out key phrases in which the key words were embedded. Key words included: values; collaboration; conflict; politics; political; personnel; policy development; policy implementation; policy; consensus; spiritual base; morals; ethics; principles; evaluation; strategic planning; Board of Trustees. This step in the data analysis greatly facilitated the delineation of themes or categories for the third step in the data analysis process. Key words were used to identify clusters of sentences which included those key words.

The third approach, termed "selective reading" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93), involved reading every single sentence or cluster of sentences and asking "what does this sentence or sentence cluster *reveal about the phenomena or experience being described* [italics in the original]" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 93)?

Through such an eclectic approach, studying the lived-experience descriptions provided by the participants, themes were identified and appropriate phrases, representative of the themes were developed.

Ultimately, these themes were gathered in what Van Manen (1990) termed "phenomenologically sensitive paragraphs" (pp. 95-96). Notes and paragraphs were written on the basis of the research activities and the reading of the textual descriptions. This process, termed "linguistic transformation" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 96) is the essence of the hermeneutic philosophy. Themes identified in the first interpretation of the transcripts became the objects of collaborative hermeneutic "conversations" between the researcher and the participants when both the stories and the transcripts were returned to the participants. In other words, the researcher and the interviewee interpreted the significance of the preliminary themes in light of the original phenomenological question(s). This process was essentially one of testing the appropriateness and significance of the themes through questioning to fully expose the meaning of the lived experience. The final essential themes pointed to the aspects or qualities which, as Van Manen (1990) stated, "make a phenomenon *what it is* and *without which* the phenomenon could *not be what it is* [italics in the original]" (p. 106).

Essential themes were identified by using what Van Manen (1990) termed "free imaginative variation" (p. 107), a process wherein the researcher asked the questions "is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon? Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 107). These questions served to distinguish those themes which were essential to the phenomenon from those themes which were considered to be incidental to the phenomenon. As Van Manen (1990) noted,

> the most difficult and controversial element of phenomenological human science [is] to differentiate between essential themes and themes that are more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study. (p. 106)

After the initial thematic analysis had been completed, the researcher began to complete the narrative stories of each of the eight superintendents (one story is found in Appendix E). The stories not only reported the results of the study, but they also were submitted to each of the participants to determine if the stories were actually representative of that which was told to the researcher. Thus, credibility of the data was further enhanced. Written in accordance with the interview questions asked of the participants, the stories were illustrative of the themes which emerged in the initial stages of the data analysis.

Transcripts, complete with the stories developed from the transcripts, were returned to all participants from early February through April, 1993 and participants were asked to review the transcripts for accuracy, omissions, and clarity of the interpretations found within the stories. A copy of the letter sent to each participant containing the instructions for reviewing the documents is included in Appendix F. Participants were asked to telephone or fax the researcher about corrections which needed to be made and to provide the researcher with a copy of any necessary changes. As data analysis progressed, the researcher telephoned some participants to seek clarification of comments to ensure the interpretations were consistent with those of the participants from their own perspectives.

For the purpose of clarification, it should be noted the stories, as originally drafted and as returned to the participants, contained a significant amount of interpretation of the interviewees' comments. These interpretations were later removed from the stories in this dissertation and were used in reporting the data analysis.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The essence of phenomenological interpretive research is to derive meanings from the lived experience of others in relation to some specific phenomenon or concept. Given the interpretive nature of the study, considerable attention was paid to the concerns offered by Bredo and Feinberg (1982) with regard to data obtained when using the interpretive or hermeneutic paradigm: credibility; transferability; and dependability. Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1986) also expressed concerns about the trustworthiness and authenticity of data in such studies.

The main assumption of the interpretivist approach is that the text of the subject makes sense and the researcher then attempts to find a coherent pattern which makes sense of the disparate pieces found in the text. Assumption of coherence could provide an erroneous interpretation by forcing together pieces not belonging together. The researcher must therefore ensure there is no misunderstanding of what literally has been done and that the "facts" obtained from the participants represent accurately the conventions and distinctions of the participants.

In a similar vein, Lincoln and Guba (1985) addressed the issue of credibility, defined as ensuring the researcher has "represented those multiple constructions of reality adequately *from the perspective of the participants* (author's emphasis)" (p. 296). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided a number of techniques researchers could use to ensure that the data and the interpretations of that data are credible: prolonged engagement; persistent observation and triangulation; peer debriefing; referential adequacy; and member checking.

Van Manen (1990) advised researchers to use the "validating circle of inquiry" (p. 27) to ensure credibility of data. This validating circle of inquiry reflects that "a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience--is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience" (p. 27).

Thus, the researcher used a number of techniques to ensure the credibility of data. These included:

1. Transcripts and, in some cases, the audio tapes, were sent to each of the participants in the study after each set of interviews. Member checking, or the process of obtaining both formal and informal feedback from the participants themselves as the study progressed, was extensively used. A formal check was conducted at the end of the data collection when the participants responded to the total set of transcripts and interpretations. In this sense, the facts must have credibility in that the person who told the researcher something can, upon presentation of the "factual" material, state the material is actually and accurately that which was told to the researcher.

2. Peer debriefing was used after the analysis of the transcripts to ensure critical interpretations derived from the data by the researcher were valid and represented "real world" conclusions which would be made by practicing superintendents. The researcher provided stories to colleagues at Alberta Education and to fellow students, some of whom had been and were practicing superintendents and deputy superintendents, to determine if the material made sense to them and represented realities in which superintendents operated.

3. Van Manen (1991) advised that hermeneutic interviews should proceed to the point that there is nothing left to say about a particular issue which was deemed to be crucial to the level of understanding required about a particular phenomenon. Thus, emergent patterns can be further explored and the researcher is kept oriented to the issue at

hand rather than exploring a series of non-related events or activities. Redundancy provided a greater level of interpretation and a greater degree of confidence in the interpretation since both the researcher and the participant could review the interpretations.

While a second set of interviews would have met Van Manen's (1991) criterion for conversing until conversation ends, such a technique was not necessary for this study since extensive description had been obtained in the initial set of interviews. Stories, drafted from the transcripts and which represented the first interpretive analysis, were sent to each participant to ensure accurate and appropriate interpretations. Thus, each participant had the opportunity to check for accuracy, interpretation of events, and to offer additional information should it be necessary to clarify or amplify description offered by the participant.

A second concern in conducting interpretive research is that of transferability wherein the reader of the study decides whether the information presented is applicable to the reader's situation. Interpretivists attempt to understand the actions of others in the every day sense of making others' reasons or motivations comprehensible or understandable. Thus, peoples' actions are described in terms of individual reasons or motives and in terms of conventions which underlie those reasons and motives.

Accordingly, the researcher must ensure the transferability of the material to the extent the researcher feels confident sufficient examples are present to substantiate the essential themes emerging from the phenomenological experiences. In other words, is there sufficient information to facilitate the interpretation of what has been done rather than literally determining what has been done? In this study, the researcher attempted to provide sufficient descriptive information in the writing of the stories of the eight participants to help others in transferring judgments to their own situations and contexts. By using the words and phrases of the individual participants, the researcher attempted to provide the reader with necessary information to facilitate transferability to their own situation.

With regard to the third concern, that of confirmability, Guba and Lincoln (1982, p. 247) noted that confirmability referred to the objectivity of the data and not to that of the researcher. The connection between confirmability and dependability is such that one cannot occur without the other. Thus, the steps taken to ensure dependability also safeguarded the confirmability of the data. Hence, the tape recordings of the interviews, the transcriptions of the interviews, the reflections of the researcher after each interview, the use of the transcripts themselves as the primary documents for analysis of the data, and the return of the transcripts and the stories developed from the transcript to each participant facilitated confirmability.

Summary

The researcher sought insights and understandings about the values which superintendents use in problem-solving and decision-making by interpreting their descriptions about incidents occurring in their work and about their motivations and goals which underlie their work. An interpretive study, following the assumptions of phenomenological, hermeneutical research provided the approach from which the study design evolved.

The primary data gathering method for the study was an in-depth interview with a number of participants. Interview questions were developed to acquire data from superintendents regarding personal goals and mission, conflicts, both of an interpersonal and political nature, policy development and implementation, power and its application and the consequences of its application, and aspects of decision-making and problem-solving styles. Participants in the study, all of whom were personally known to the researcher, were all practicing superintendents of schools in the Province of Alberta. All willingly agreed to participate in the study and all were extremely frank in describing their personal beliefs, conflict situations, and other aspects of their professional lives.

Data analysis occurred throughout the data collection phase of the study and a final comprehensive analysis was undertaken once all the data were collected. The researcher used a variety of analytical methods described in the literature and was greatly assisted in the analysis by the use of a computer program which facilitated a key word search in the transcribed interviews. When the data analysis was completed, six essential themes had emerged: 1) professional beliefs and values; 2) assessing the rightness of decisions; 3) building of agreements and reconciling political interests; 4) power, authority, relationships with others, and decision-making; 5) policy development and implementation; and 6) management and leadership.

Chapter Four

A Thematic Interpretation of the Values of Superintendents and Their Influence on Problem-solving and Decision-making

Introduction

The initial data contained the stories of the eight superintendents who agreed to participate in this study. These superintendents shared their values, principles, and beliefs and how these affected the work they did on a short- and long-term basis. While each of the individuals must be considered as operating in a unique context, the stories they told offered a number of common themes which helped to address the major question for the study: "What role do values play in the decision-making and problem-solving activities of Alberta school superintendents?"

If we assume, as Greenfield (1986) pointed out, "values bespeak the human condition" (p. 57), then it is safe to assume values, one of the fundamental bases to human motives and behaviours, are deeply embedded in the times and contexts in which the human behaviour occurs. The interpretation of the data involved a search for meaning such that a deeper understanding of the work experiences of these superintendents could be achieved. If the function of values is, as Rokeach (1979) observed, to serve as "standards which guide on-going activities" (p. 22), then the normative component of superintendent decision-making and problem-solving could best be examined through their own descriptions of this normative component and those normative situations they encountered.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an interpretation of the stories told by the eight superintendents. While there were unique themes which applied to one or more of the superintendents, there were also significant commonalities among all of the participants. Results of the analysis are organized according to six themes:

1. Personal and professional beliefs and values.
2. Assessing the rightness of decisions.
3. The building of agreements and reconciling political interests.
4. Power, authority, relationships, and decision-making.

5. Policy development and implementation.

6. Management and leadership of the superintendent.

As the thematic analysis proceeds, it will be apparent that consistent threads appear in each theme. This has occurred not to promote redundancy or to force coherence in the thematic analysis. Rather, the recurrence of beliefs should be construed as indicative of the degree of integrity these superintendents possess--integrity defined as a sense of oneness or wholeness. For want of a better term, these individuals have deeply held prejudices, or principles, which they hold dear and affect all they do. These are concepts of "ought" or "should" and are based on fundamental assumptions of right, good, and how these concepts must be practiced.

Theme One: Personal and Professional Beliefs and Values

Introduction

Each of the eight superintendents who participated in this study clearly stated a number of personal and professional beliefs and values. Their stories provided an excellent opportunity to explore those beliefs and values and how they came to be formed, both inside and outside the work environment. Questions were asked to determine their personal and professional values and the importance they placed on the values.

During the interview process, other supplementary questions were posed which prompted respondents to provide clarification of their responses such that meanings could be understood. In addition, respondents were asked to provide specific examples where beliefs influenced professional practice.

Luke

Luke felt his family was the most important aspect of both his personal and professional life. He also chose to demonstrate family values in his professional work and likened "want[ing] to see yourself in a situation where you are influencing your own children, doing the right thing" (Luke, p. 4) to professional relationships "with teachers [where] you want to be a model to them [and] want to be perceived as being fair, honest, and trustworthy" (Luke, p. 4). More importantly, Luke indicated, "I want the same thing in my work situation as I do in my family situation. I think that's important" (Luke, p. 4).

In short, Luke felt being the best he could be in his family required him to be the best he could be in his work. This was not without cost however, since the 50 hour work weeks, numerous evening Board meetings, and attendance at in-service sessions significantly detracted from being the best he could be with his family. Luke had to make a conscious decision to reconcile work and family demands by "setting priorities according to what needs to be done at the work situation as well as what needs to be done in your personal or family situation and make sure that you meet them" (Luke, p. 5). The conflict for Luke arose when circumstances precluded him from meeting the obligations associated with both. As he noted, "People ask me what's important, how they should prioritize things. I always put family first. Now my problem is, sometimes I say that, but personally [at times], you have a conflict with that" (Luke, p. 5).

For Luke, the personal and professional values with the most pronounced effect on his life were those of trust, honesty, integrity, fairness, and modeling appropriate behaviours to others. The Catholic emphasis of the school district in which he worked also placed a significant obligation on Luke to advocate for and practice the values associated with the faith. Consequently, in dealing with others, he felt he must demonstrate tolerance, understanding of and for various and differing points of view, and respect for the differing values of others.

Luke was equally forthright in describing situations which caused him stress as he fulfilled his duties as superintendent. He did not express any frustration or disappointment over the actions of teachers and field administrators in making decisions and developing action plans by which the decisions could be implemented. Rather, his frustrations stemmed from a perceived lack of appreciation on the part of trustees for the amount of work the superintendent must undertake on both a short- and a long-term basis. In order to convey to the Board what he was to do, what had been done, and the results achieved, Luke adopted a very proactive approach characterized by the annual development of a Priorities Report and an Achievement Report, which were then used in his annual evaluation. While these documents were seen to be important in creating an awareness in the trustees for the amount and diverse nature of the work Luke undertook, they were also viewed as highly important in ensuring a fair and just annual evaluation.

Luke strongly advocated the necessity of self-care for superintendents and had recently made some changes in his lifestyle which not only allowed him to spend more time with his family, but also to become more active physically through an exercise program. He said that alleviating stress through such actions made him far more productive at work both in terms of the quantity and quality of tasks accomplished. Both he and his wife participated in the physical activity program on a regular basis.

Leonard

Like Luke, Leonard placed a great value on family and the relationships inherent in the family. As he stated, "The personal life [i.e., family] has really been a source of satisfaction and a lot of support" (Leonard, p. 3). Indeed, the value he attached to family relationships was the basis for his relationships with professional colleagues, particularly when he occupied less senior administrative positions in his former school district. Leonard wistfully noted that the superintendency placed constraints on the types of personal relationships he could develop and enjoy with members of the professional staff. In his present professional capacity, Leonard noted he very much enjoyed working with his colleagues but, in his previous positions, he was able to "probably [get] much closer to teachers and administrators that you grow up [with] than you necessarily do when you move in as a superintendent to another district" (Leonard, p. 3).

In this respect, it could be conjectured the family relationships compensated, to some extent, for the types of relationships he wanted with others but which were precluded because of his position. Recognizing relationships with staff and colleagues change when one becomes a superintendent, Leonard stressed the importance of a professional relationship with others based on working hard for others and on making the school system the best it can be for students. Leonard also noted that in his family relationships, he attempted to "be the best you can be, to live a fulfilled life, and to be a caring type of person" (Leonard, p. 5). Leonard extrapolated those values to his professional life and stated, "In my professional life, I want to be the best superintendent that I possibly can be, so to those extents they're [i.e., personal and professional lives] very similar" (Leonard, p. 5). Importantly, Leonard felt "I don't see any problems between the two" (Leonard, p. 5).

Leonard commented on the degree of stress he felt as a superintendent and, in his situation, the majority of the stress came from determining actions which were most desirable given the fiscal realities faced by his school system. Choosing was based, to a very large extent, on the priorities identified through the vision and mission statements for the school system and through a basic belief in the ability of others to make choices based on the same parameters. In a "have not" school district, Leonard was forced to argue passionately for dollars to secure the appointment of additional staff when additional money became available through enrolment increases. Trustees, particularly the Board Chairman, were not easily swayed in these arguments but, typically, agreement was achieved.

Henry

Henry, too, believed his personal and professional goals were highly integrated but he indicated this high degree of integration was not without personal cost, particularly in his relationships with his family. His desire to be the best he could be, to serve and to positively affect others, and his competitiveness resulted in long hours spent at his desk and less time spent at home. Fortunately, Henry recognized the consequences of these long hours and noted "I've got[ten] a little more careful lately with regard to making sure that I'm looking after my personal goals, the happiness in your marriage; you've got to take care of that and you've got to spend enough time at home so that you've got good rapport there" (Henry, p. 5). Noting he had "sacrificed that over my life" (Henry, p. 5), and that his home life had been adversely affected by his long hours at his desk, Henry was making a conscious attempt to leave the office at a more acceptable time. Specifically mentioning he took the time to become more physically active, Henry felt this had provided him with additional energy to meet the demands of his role.

However, the demands of the superintendency were still having a significant effect on his life at home since he often came home tired, with little energy left to devote to his family, and, at times, overwrought and preoccupied with office and system events. His words best describe the feelings and consequences:

> The best thing you can do is sit down in front of the TV set and shut your mouth, because if you say anything, you're probably going to be snapping at somebody, and they don't ask for that. So you brood; you tend to brood a little bit when you're tired, overworked, over tired, and the best of your intentions don't always materialize, naturally, and it affects your [family life]. (Henry, p. 6)

Henry noted the superintendency was an all-consuming occupation: "It dominates and takes over your whole life" (Henry, p. 6). Indeed, Henry had to go so far as to have his wife telephone him if he was at the office after 10:00 PM. While he recognized this was unhealthy, he nonetheless continued to work the long hours.

The conscious decision to work the long hours was based on priority use of time: Knowing his influence could be best exercised during the school day through formal and informal contacts with principals, teachers, and trustees, Henry completed his paperwork in the evenings, thus sacrificing time with his family.

Notwithstanding the importance of Henry's and the District's mission, at times, the interests of others tended to be advanced at the expense of the clients to be served. Henry specifically noted that teachers often demanded increased support systems as they carried out their own professional roles and those interests could not be met since, in Henry's estimation, they did not have greater importance than the children to be served. Henry was also highly conscious of the bottom-line in budgeting, particularly as he sought to balance the interests of the teaching staff against those of the school district. He noted that if he was to be unable to maximize the use of fiscal resources, the Board would probably find another superintendent who could.

Henry also noted that as superintendent, he must be proactive in the communication process since he was uncertain that appropriate messages, particularly those about the rationale for decisions of a budgetary nature, were being given by field administrators to both the staff and the public. Controlling the communication process through the Board office was tenuous at best, prompting Henry to adopt his proactive stance in discussing with staff and the public those decisions which had been made by the central administration and the Board. Control, in this sense, was restricted to advancing his own views to and attempting to influence others . In one instance where additional funds were obtained for a special curriculum project, Henry chose to add additional staff rather than using the regular staffing funds since he felt that it would have been unfair and dishonest to have done anything else.

James

As with the other superintendents, James placed great importance on the family: "[What's important to me] is a sense of family, commitment to family; satisfaction with what I'm doing; contentment with being happy, and enjoying life" (James, p. 2). He indicated his personal and professional values were highly integrated and that this integration, or being a "whole person" (James, p. 3), was a prerequisite for being a successful superintendent. Much like Henry, James indicated his professional goals could become all-consuming, thus having a negative effect on his personal life, particularly in relation to his family.

James discussed some changes he made in school entrance age and in reconfiguring the schools in the district. Reflecting upon the consequences of the changes, James stated, "I could have avoided a lot of frustration and conflict in the community and amongst staff if I had said, 'Okay! Let's just leave it as it is.' I took a lot of heat; there was a lot of pressure on me personally for that from within and without" (James, p. 14). Both personally and professionally, James was to suffer: "I put up with personal attacks from the community [and] I put up with some disbelief from our teaching staff" (James, p. 14).

For his wife, the consequences were equally profound: "My wife doesn't cope with it very well. She would go tomorrow. She feels the pressure and feels that the whole community is quite negative in a sense because we only hear the negative" (James, p. 15).

Later, James discussed the negative attributions given to him by members of the community, particularly those campaigning for trustee in the coming elections, and the effect of these attributions on his wife, who also worked in the community and heard these attributions. Despite his wife's wish that he "take a teaching job in Assumption and just teach your regular six-hour day, put your time in, do whatever you have to do, and let's get on with our life" (James, p. 21), James could not abandon his profession easily. He commented, "This is such a challenge to me as to where we're going. What we're doing is right. We have a direction, [and] I don't want to jump out of it" (James, p. 21). To state that James was torn between what he wanted as part of his personal goals and the effect of his professional life upon those goals, particularly in regard to his family, would be an understatement given his wife's reaction to community feelings toward her husband's work in general and toward her husband in particular. Reconciling his sense of mission with the effects this mission had on his family was extremely difficult for James.

He indicated his personal and professional values were highly integrated although there were some differences. In a personal sense, James placed great importance on his family, commitment, contentment, being happy, his religious faith, and relationships with others. He also placed significant importance on maintaining personal wellness and felt physical exercise associated with this wellness allowed him to cope better with the stresses of the superintendency and to do a much more thorough job at work.

James linked his personal value base very strongly to his professional role as superintendent and felt he had to be a "whole" person, thus emphasizing commitment, relationships, concern for others, and a sense of ethical conduct which related to his doing the right things. For James, doing the right things revolved primarily around doing what was best for children, helping them to succeed in all senses of the word. In essence, this desire was his mission for his role. The actions he took to achieve this mission had to reflect this desire. As an educational leader, he viewed his task as creating and meeting the broad vision for student achievement as the primary focus of the school system. In his own words, James viewed leadership as the process of "translating visions into reality and sustaining them over time" (James, p. 4). This vision had to reflect a desired state of affairs and then working with others "on the floor" (James, p. 4) to advocate for his vision to the extent that it became the vision of those with whom he worked rather than his vision alone.

James expressed some reservations about the degree to which his professional goals could become all-consuming, thus having a negative effect upon his personal life. However, he indicated he was able to turn off the professional goals and enjoy the moments in his personal life when he could spend time on his hobbies, physical exercise, or just watching a baseball game on television. Both personally and professionally, James was motivated by a strong desire for improvement--finding new ways of doing things better. He stated he was very competitive and liked the comment that "winning isn't the only thing, it's everything" (James, p. 5). He felt this attitude helped him in his professional life as it motivated him to move beyond satisfaction with the status quo.

In a reflective context, James noted that his past evaluations reflected high energy levels, commitment, and a desire to see positive improvements. However, the downside was reflected in the comment that he was perceived to be undertaking too many things at one time, thus creating stress for others. James felt this criticism was somewhat unwarranted since, in his view, the system had to proceed to make simultaneous improvements on numerous fronts.

John

John also indicated his family was extremely important to him and that the nature of the superintendency, particularly the time which it required, had a significant effect upon family relationships: "Doing a superintendent's job is far more demanding in terms of personal time" (John, p. 7). However, John indicated he reconciled the difficulties inherent in being both superintendent and a family person by "putting my family first when I found out that being a superintendent took a lot more time than being a school administrator or teacher. If I ever placed my job before my family, then I had the wrong priorities" (John, p. 7). Of major importance was the view John expressed regarding the similarities of values governing family relationships and the work of the superintendent. John recognized the goals he had at work were those oriented toward public education, implementation of Board policies, and the work of the school. Family commitments were to people in the family. However, while John viewed these as "two discrete items, the way in which you deal in these realms should be essentially the same, working with the same values" (John, p. 8).

John felt he was successfully able to reconcile the demands of the job and the family because he had the full support of his family: "My family supported me in it and said, 'It's okay, you know. It's okay that you spend that time there'" (John, p. 8). However, he was unequivocal in stating, "I don't think it was ever a conflict in my mind to that point because the Board wouldn't see what's happening in myself. I think the Board would realize that when it comes to personal values, my family would come before the job" (John, p. 8). Should this not occur, John was equally unequivocal about what the choice would be: "If I can't make the two work together, then I've got to find another job. My family understands that too" (John, p. 8).

On a personal basis, John indicated he has felt uncomfortable with the predominance of individual rights over the collective and communitarian good and recognized actions he took must always recognize both, but not at the expense of either. This strong view of communitarian versus individual rights was carried over into his practice as superintendent. John used these two fundamental views as a "decision screen" (John, p. 6) in determining the rightness of decisions made by the school system: "I think that the two have to work together where you don't let one individual action work to the detriment of the general welfare. On the other hand, the general welfare shouldn't work to the detriment of the individual. You've got to look at both of them [and] it's a screen you have to use for decision-making" (John, p. 6).

George

George expanded upon the professional component of his life and viewed himself, first and foremost, as a teacher. He believed students must be well taught and a well-educated citizenry was critically important to society. By teaching teachers, principals and Board members, George felt he could affect the education children received.

Unlike the other superintendents, George, a Catholic superintendent, did not speak of the importance of family and the family relationships with respect to his position. In a broader context, however, George spoke of the necessity to be an integrated person both personally and professionally: "I don't have a company or a home mask" (George, p. 8). Indeed, as George was being interviewed, he drew attention to his credenza on which a gift from his wife was prominently displayed: a crab. George stated the gift was made so that "they'll know at work what you're like at home" (George, p. 8). Through this use of humour, George indicated, "I'm as good at home as I am here. I am the same person. I don't think I'm capable of being someone else" (George, p. 8).

George chose to illustrate his integration of personal and professional values by relating a story in which he was interviewed by a reporter about his feelings on report cards and how he dealt with report cards as a parent. In response to the question, "How do you deal with your own family when they bring home report cards?", George said, "I like to think in the same way as I'm telling you that parents in our audience [do]" (George, p. 8). When the reporter noted George was not only a parent, but also an educator, he responded with "Yes, but I'm still only one person" (George, p. 8). George spoke even more strongly of the degree of integration of his personal and professional self:

> I don't think I've ever integrated [aspects of my personal and professional lives]. I don't think I've ever separated them. I am at heart a teacher. I got the job I have because that's my background and I never really tried to be a heck of a lot else. (George, p. 8)

Thomas

In a similar vein to George, Thomas, a Catholic superintendent, did not explicitly mention the importance of family, although he focused on the necessity of building and maintaining relationships with differing segments of the educational community and the community at large. As he stated, "It's really important to me to have a sincere sense in feeling the community I work with, the teachers that I work with, the parents, the kids--we all understand--that this is a togetherness; a collaborative effort" (Thomas, p. 5). In this sense, Thomas viewed family in a much broader sense than perhaps did the other superintendents. For Thomas, the family also included the broad educational community and the importance he attached to the relationships in this "family" was very similar to that expressed by other superintendents in relation to their immediate family.

Thomas commented on his degree of integration of personal and professional self:

> What you see is what you get. I'm not any different in the workplace than I am at home; I'm the same person. Because I happen to be in the workplace, I don't change hats and say, "Well, now I've disassociated my beliefs or my values or my being any differently than I am in any other walks of life." (Thomas, p. 7)

He took this belief one step further: "I'm dealing with matters the same as I would in any other place" (Thomas, p. 7).

Thomas also expressed a strong spiritual base for his becoming an educator. As he stated,

> I guess I view my job in life as what's been dealt me. I'm deeply convicted in my belief, but I believe strongly that I was meant to be here for some particular purpose and, hopefully, the purpose that I'm fulfilling these days is the one that I was selected to do. (Thomas, p. 10)

Consequently, Thomas felt an obligation to do and be the best he could be as an educator, although he pointed out obligation alone did not keep him in his present capacity; he also liked what he did. As he stated, "I enjoy very much what I'm doing, but yet I believe that there's a purpose. Somewhere I've been selected to do something, like we all have. I believe that; I believe that very strongly" (Thomas, p. 11).

Peter

Unlike George and Thomas, Peter not only spoke of the importance of family to him, but also of the consequences the superintendency had on his family life. Given that Peter was a traveling superintendent, he was often not at home in the evenings and this created professional and personal conflicts for him. As he stated, "My family is very important to me and that was one of the conflicts we ran into in regards to [my job]. The Boards recognized that I was just giving way too much of my time and I had no time for family" (Peter, p. 3). Peter did speak of the importance of integrating personal and professional goals and recognized some superintendents were still able to maintain some distance between the two. He noted his wife often reminded him of the necessity to distance the two somewhat more than he had been able to do, stating, "My wife points it out to me on a fairly regular basis. I think I should be able to say, 'Okay, now I stop, and now I start doing something else'" (Peter, p. 10). His wife's comments, though cautionary, went unheeded. As Peter stated, "I never know really when I stop working. I think I work all of the time, and I don't mean that in a sympathy routine; I think that's just part of my job, that when people see me in the community, [I'm still the superintendent]" (Peter, p. 8).

The Interpretive Context

The descriptions provided by the superintendents provided some valuable insights into the demands of the superintendency and the effect of these demands on the family. Six of the eight superintendents noted the family was singularly important in their lives and if a choice had to be made between the family and the job, the family would win out. While this is a noble statement, the truth of the matter is singularly different. Without exception, the superintendents noted the time commitments demanded by the job were such that the family suffered. Despite conscious attempts to limit the all-consuming nature of the superintendency, Luke, Peter, and Henry, for example, continued to give to the position and to take time from the family.

James went even further: Despite the negative criticism levied against him and to which his wife was party, and despite his wife's wish that he quit and take a teaching position in a remote area of Alberta, James was committed to following through on his initiatives because he believed them to be right for students. The degree of rightness was obviously not felt by the community in which he lived and worked.

Leonard provided valuable insight as to why the family is so important. The role of the superintendency makes it difficult for the superintendent to establish deep personal relationships with colleagues. Hence, the family remains the single source of the deep and lasting relationships individuals need. The loneliness felt by those at the top of the local educational hierarchy requires a support base be established somewhere else--in the family itself. A second interpretation about the value of family and the effect of that value upon the practice superintendents can be seen in the way they care about, interact, and collaborate with others in the school system. Luke gave valuable insight into this area when he stated,

> I think you want to see yourself in a situation where you are influencing your own children, for example, to do the right thing. I think in your professional relationship with teachers you want to be a model to them; you want to be perceived as being fair, honest, and trustworthy. (Luke, p. 4)

In relation to his Catholic school system, Luke felt that the obligation to put values into practice was critically important and he felt these values were inherent in his own family relationships: "Honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness are important. Coming from a Catholic dimension as well, I think the Gospel values are very important" (Luke, p. 4).

All superintendents felt they operated from the same value base in both personal and professional settings. Consequently, all felt they were highly integrated in their personal and professional lives, thus providing them with a clear sense of direction not only in terms of what they did, but also in terms of thinking of the effect of those actions on others. None had a "company mask" and a "home mask" to be worn in appropriate settings. In this context, sincerity was especially important. In other words, practicing what one believed at home and at work was crucially important in the superintendency.

Finally, all superintendents, some more directly than others, commented on the need for personal integrity--acting in a manner consistent with personal beliefs and the desired vision for the organization. The notion of "it all depends", situational imperatives, cannot be said to apply universally to these superintendents, for to have followed this philosophy would have meant a diminution of themselves. George, however, demonstrated that situational imperatives must be considered, particularly in his personal and professional feelings about the implementing Youth Network News (YNN) programming in the schools:

> In my own case, [while] I'd like to tell you that I always do the right thing, there are some times when I [consider expedient options]. I like to think that it doesn't and I suspect it does and I need to spend a lot of time saying, "I can live with that." Like the advertising one. I think I'd like to say, "No, we've got to protect our kids from things this." Then, over and against that, I think I better wake up and smell the coffee and what are kids facing 24 hours a day? So, I will say, "I'll take the free TV's and the commercials because I think this is 1992." (George, pp. 38-39)
>
> I don't know whether I've learned in that or whether I'm expedient. I try not to be. I try to have ideals. But, I don't know. Twenty years ago, the offer of the television sets wouldn't have even reached the Board table. But, now it's here! (George, p. 40)

Ironically, standing up for what one believes, can be seen to have dramatic consequences, not all of them pleasant, for the superintendent. In no other area are the consequences of the dialectic of process and substance more apparent than in the amount of stress which the dialectic generates for superintendents. Because process matters so much in the resolution of diverse interests (politics), process may very well triumph over the substance, the end of the decision. What becomes even more critical for the superintendent is serving an elected Board whose members may be so convinced of pleasing all with both process and substance that both become subverted. The consequences for both institutional and superintendent integrity assume magnitudes unknown and unappreciated by almost all others, except other superintendents, in the education system.

Increasing politicization, in any endeavour, but especially in education, occurs when process subsumes substance and relationships are viewed as more important than what the relationships are to accomplish within the organization. At the Board level, the superintendent became consumed with working with trustees, attempting to reach a psychological accommodation wherein damaged relationships will be tolerated because the end sought was critically important in maintaining consistency with sated organizational goals and values.

However, the superintendents, in order to survive, had to pay due and careful attention to process, particularly in dealings with the Board. Both informal and formal methods were chosen to exercise process. With informal methods, both trustees and others in the system could be guided with a minimum of formal bureaucratic structures and strictures. The informal processes were far more indicative of values in action, since it was the informal process which paid close attention to the way in which values influence and affect how people treat each other, make decisions, and solve problems. Formal structures tended to work within bounds established through standard operating procedures--policy and accepted practice within the educational system--and expectations established through rules.

Standard operating procedures could often come into conflict with a simultaneous need to allow others to make decisions in their own environments, subject to some situational imperatives indicative of the circumstances. However, standard operating procedures and policy did not address all situations encountered in the daily life of the school system in general. When decisions had to be made and policy could provide the appropriate guidance for determining actions, discretion had to be encouraged and facilitated. However, this discretion was guided by something more fundamental: Invariably this returned to the values held and articulated by the organization in general and by the superintendent in particular. Again, substance and process were closely linked.

However, the danger was that process, particularly at the political level, may win out over substance. Self-interest, clearly illustrated in the excerpts, was the primary characteristic in areas where process dominated. Further, the self-interest of the teaching force and other school jurisdictions could be seen. Notwithstanding the examples, substance was also demonstrated in an attempt to counteract, to varying degrees, the self-serving attributes of process.

These superintendents, in an attempt to inculcate more substance, often increased process, particularly at the Board level, to ensure political information, obtained by trustees, was countered by other political and correct information. While attempting to direct more substance, they were in effect, increasing process through increased checks and balances.

In those areas were process and substance collided, the superintendents had to determine the most important issues and devote efforts to resolving them. The formal and informal process in the school system allowed a means by which the superintendent could keep others focused on their own jobs and ameliorate the distractions which occurred over major issues. Again, the behaviours of these superintendents were of paramount importance, and contact with others, both formally and informally, served to give messages to others. Superintendents were able to focus on substance because of their knowledge of education. It was this knowledge which provided for empathy of others' positions and for a commonality of direction, based on shared values. It enabled the superintendents to find out what problems were being encountered and to relate these problems to the knowledge possessed. Simply by being perceived as knowing by others may have caused fewer conflicts and less stress since others were reluctant to press their own cases to the limit. Knowledge also may allow the superintendents to direct the actions of others, not necessarily a desirable state of affairs, in those cases where directive action was necessary to resolve an issue.

Issues of substance also were debated and resolved through a variety of other strategies which included, but were not limited to, working with others in small groups or individually, offering reasons for decisions made, reorganizing when and where necessary, identifying clear responsibilities for others, using the informal and formal structures in the system to enhance communication, providing autonomy to others to make decisions closer to the effect of the decisions, and taking action in those instances where the performance of others was less than adequate. By focusing on substance--concrete, identifiable, important, value-laden, and critical issues--the superintendents did not negate the importance of process but recognized substance was far more important, particularly in sending messages to others about the business of the system and how the services were to be provided.

Focusing on substance required integrity and emphasis on some fundamental values which included ethical standards, belief in the ability and capabilities of others, trust, vision, delegation of authority and responsibility with the concomitant accountability, and a basic belief in the validity of one's own values which underpin decisions. Despite the fundamental beliefs reflected in emphasizing substance, superintendents often second guessed their actions. Unfortunately, the questioning often occurred because of the process used in making and implementing the decisions.

The most critical areas faced by these superintendents involved decisions with personal, political, and personnel overtones, especially when the Board was involved. In analyzing these superintendents' stories, it was apparent that there is no simple prescription to be obtained through interpreting their actions for others to follow in similar circumstances. What did emerge, however, was the careful use of judgment, reflection (though not to the degree expected), often characterized by second-guessing one's actions and decisions, and a reliance upon experience to serve as a guide. All of these however, were grounded in some fundamental beliefs about what was right and proper, not necessarily just in specific circumstances, but what was right and proper generally. They also determined to what extent more specific process needed to be put into place to resolve situations. This determination was based on expanding the opportunities for others to participate more actively in the decisions which affected them and upon the necessity for providing services to the clients of the school system. Because they valued simplicity over complicated processes, substance was achieved readily with greater commitment.

This can be seen in the attitudes the superintendents expressed toward localized decision-making rather than bureaucratic decision-making. Stretching strengths of individuals was far more important than bureaucratic rule following and sanctions being applied when rules were not followed. Communication was fostered through informal rather than formal means since memoranda, over reliance on reports, and regularized meetings, while necessary for communication, were not necessarily sufficient to deal with issues. Communication could become stilted, less than candid, emphasize process rather than substance, and encourage conflict rather than its resolution.

In those instances where conflict was inevitable and compromise may be the solution to resolve the conflict, the superintendents invariably chose to confront the issue rather than compromise on something seen to be extremely important. Confrontation and conflict were viewed as necessary aspects of taking new directions which would provide better quality service to the client of the system. Handling the confrontation and conflict reveal significant values of the superintendents.

First, the superintendents demonstrated an absence of a heavy-handed imposition of their own will on others without hearing and listening to the positions of others. While giving orders may have reduced the confrontation, in many instances giving orders could not and did not represent either a practicable or a principled approach to resolution. In fact, giving orders or directions would have served only to exacerbate the issue since the root causes would not have been resolved. Further, such an approach would not have been reconcilable with attitudes expressed regarding maintaining the dignity of others, a concern for the feelings of others, or a concern for empowering others in their own work.

Focusing on issues rather than process meant that issues were far more important than the personalities of the persons involved. Superintendents tended to focus on the issue rather than the personalities of those involved, particularly if those involved were employees, parents, or students. Unfortunately, at the Board level, personalities often became the issue, and some of the superintendents were caught in the middle of trustees or, more unfortunately, in the argument that the superintendent's personality was the issue. In these cases, fault-finding on the part of trustees became the issue. Others, outside the formal organization often used their political influence to convince trustees the personality of the superintendent was the issue underpinning actions perceived to be negative for children, teachers, and other stakeholders in the educational enterprise. In these cases, the superintendent was forced to rely on the good will of other trustees who chose not to be swayed by the political machinations of other trustees and political proponents. Indeed, an anomalous situation existed: Superintendents were expected by trustees to focus on issues rather than personalities and to reward and recognize the actions of others; simultaneously, trustees did not, in some cases, demonstrate such behaviour toward the superintendent. Notwithstanding the absence of loyalty demonstrated toward the superintendent, universally, the superintendents expressed a strong loyalty toward their Boards.

These superintendents also expressed a strong desire to have open, frank debate on issues. Decisions stemming from these debates were not determined to be effective based on the philosophy of win-lose. Rather, decisions were assessed on their rightness, primarily as this rightness related to providing enhanced service to students and meeting certain requirements for basic human dignity, organizational mission, and personal self-expression. Winning and losing invariably were equated to personality issues rather than to issues. This same attitude was expressed at the Board table and the superintendents did not view the non-adoption of their recommendations as personal losses to be borne. Rather, they recognized their obligation to argue passionately, at the Board table, particularly if the issue directly reflected services to children, for their recommendations. "Losing" may have been regarded as differences in judgment and interpretation of facts, based on value prejudices of the trustees, than as a personal loss.

By adopting such a view, and modeling it to others, the superintendents demonstrated the value of open and honest debate to others, the worth of logical arguments substantiated by facts, mutual respect for the opinions and points of view of others, and goodwill of and from others. In addition, this tactic demonstrated the values and abilities of others were important, as well as the deeply held values of their school systems. These superintendents also chose to present their views and values to others on formal and informal visits. They also obtained the views of others, particularly teachers and parents, before decisions would be made. Open exchange of views and ideas was extremely important, regardless of the source of the views and venue in which the exchange took place. In many cases, the superintendents chose to exercise their influence in areas where it could do the most good--invariably this meant out of the office.

Honesty was demonstrated to others, particularly in outlining both advantages and disadvantages to particular courses of action. However, this did not mean superintendents told all at all meetings in an attempt to force consensus. Dissension, particularly with staff, was handled on a one-on-one basis to serve two purposes: The first purpose was to demonstrate a respect for the opinions of the individual concerned; the second was to continue to propound the fundamental value of a course of action. Consensus was important, as witnessed by building agreements, but not at the expense of basic and fundamental personal and organizational values, direction of the school system, or service to children.

A number of superintendents spoke of the value of timing as a critical component in issues resolution. As a corollary, patience became a very important value in this consideration. This may be akin to the old adage of planting a seed, watering it, nurturing it, and watching it flourish in and of its own accord. Characteristically, the time allowed for issues resolution was increased to allow further debate, to improve the quality of the decision, and to secure a more broadly-based commitment to the decision. Careful during presentations not to appear to have made up their minds before hand, the superintendents spoke of the necessity for being well-planned but simultaneously open to new suggestions from others. Despite their best intentions, people often perceived the superintendents to have made up their minds before hearing from others. Such are the contradictions in this position.

Superintendents also spent time dealing with major issues, encouraging others to deal with issues in the same manner. Characteristically, they valued open and wide debate on the issues so that a broad-based agreement on resolution could occur. Just as importantly, this created and nurtured the environment in which issues could be discussed openly and honestly. In those instances where consensus could not be reached on a critical issue, superintendents were ready to step in and advance their own solution. When, as one superintendent said, "the buck stops at the superintendent's desk", becomes the necessary philosophy to follow, all superintendents were prepared to exercise their prerogative to make final decisions, although this rarely occurred.

Not one superintendent spoke on the value of compromise as an effective tool for conflict resolution. Indeed, the opposite occurred and one superintendent specifically stated that compromise was an ineffective tool. While compromise could create the impression that there were no winners or losers in a debate, the truth was somewhat different. Unless individuals were committed to one point of view, resentments were maintained and the underground political network used to further advance their own political agenda and undermine the compromise decision. Compromise operating under the aegis of consensus was viewed in a highly negative sense. Just as importantly, by adopting a compromise approach, those in the system were left not knowing where the superintendent "was coming from", raising the possibility that similar issues could arise in the future. Thus, compromise may have reduced the superintendent's credibility and ability to influence the actions of others.

In crucial matters, the goals of the system, as reflected in the jurisdiction's mission statement and the superintendent's vision, become paramount. Consensus reached on these broad goals was seen to be the desirable option. Further, decisions had to reflect fairness--respecting the other's point of view and circumstances--rather than concerns relating to simple justice--contractual obligations based on a *quid pro quo* reflected in the view that if individuals do what they are obligated to do, they will be treated in a like manner. Indeed, superintendents spoke frequently and ardently of the necessity to make fair decisions, based on well-informed judgment, tempered by values of concern for others, honesty, trust, common purpose, respect for others' points of view, and commonly held agreements to proceed with a course of action.

Again, the concept of integrity emerged as a critical concept in conflict resolution. While these superintendents generally did not wish to have an organization characterized by conflict, they did not, as Thomas stated most eloquently, aver conflict when it arose. They were prepared to confront issues of all types, preferably with advance support from the Board. When support was not immediately known, these superintendents proceeded to exercise their discretion based on the perceived degree of trust the Board had placed in them. Trust had been developed over time, and because of this trust, the superintendents the superintendents did not keep their views hidden from either the Board or other members of the educational organization. Highly committed to their own views, values, and beliefs, these superintendents were not prepared to give conflicting messages to others by not standing for what they had already articulated and demonstrated. Integrity was reflected in not only standing for something, but ensuring that others know what it was they stood for.

All of the foregoing is not to say, however, that the essential value of survival was not a consideration for these superintendents. Indeed, they wondered, and wondered often, with much disquietude, about their continued employment as a superintendent, particularly when the support from the Board was not seen to be adequate or was not seen at all. In these instances, they became increasingly cautious, spending more time gathering additional information and working with trustees to apprise them of situations and probable courses of action. Invariably, the Board Chairman was the beneficiary of this extra intelligence, but there was no guarantee that other trustees were kept informed by the Chairman. This assumed a lesser degree of importance when the relationship between the superintendent and the Board was characterized by mutual trust, respect, integrity, honesty, open communication, and loyalty. When Boards, for reasons which were usually political and process oriented, took issue with both the process and substance of superintendents' actions, the superintendents were obligated to speak up for themselves, confront the issue, and achieve a degree of resolution. In these instances, they had to demonstrate their own commitment to ethical behaviour and personal integrity and attempted to make more certain the uncertain which, if left alone, could result in a paralysis of action, and a focus on taking the easiest way out.

Summary

The notion of integrity, expressed both indirectly and directly by these superintendents, was of major importance to them in both a personal and a professional sense. A requirement for successful and happy family life, it was a prerequisite for establishing and maintaining relationships with others in their school systems and in articulating and practicing some fundamental beliefs. These superintendents did not rely upon charisma, although some were highly charismatic, or sheer force of personality to see them through days and years on their jobs.

Rather, their views about people, the necessity for establishing and maintaining relationships based on mutual trust, honesty, dignity, and respect were essential as they held both a vision for the system, themselves, and faced the unpleasant realities interjecting themselves into the lives of the superintendents. The concept of integrity as the main force in both personal and professional values of superintendents provides the guidance necessary for resolving issues on a day-to-day management basis and for resolving those "interjecting" crises. Strong personal ethics, a positive belief in others most often reflected in actively involving others in decision-making and problem-solving, a strong vision for the organization and for themselves, a strong belief in open and candid communication, emerged as strong personal tendencies, prejudices, or principles in these superintendents.

These beliefs and/or principles were formed over time and served as the links between what was said and what was done. They determined the consistency and coherence among what the school system wanted to accomplish, the personal values and beliefs of the superintendent, and what was done.

Theme Two: Assessing the Rightness of Decisions

Introduction

Superintendents have beliefs about what is good and right and they bring these beliefs to the problems they face and must resolve. While all school systems have policies in place to guide problem-solving and decision-making, situational demands force the superintendent to examine not only the policy content and rules which govern some organizational situations, but also their basic beliefs since the rules and policies cannot possibly govern all situations they encounter. These beliefs provide a guide to superintendents in choosing a vision for their organization and in devising methods or plans to make this vision a reality.

The question to be asked is what makes these prejudices the right ones? Superintendents in this study, without exception, expressed strong religious beliefs which, in and of themselves, should not be considered as totally necessary or sufficient for success in their vocation. However, the religious beliefs, and their concomitant expectations for behaviour, particularly in regard to dealing with others, can be viewed in the context of ethical standards, standards which provided these individuals with a sense of inner direction--a "sensitive moral compass"--to guide them through their daily tasks. Responses of the superintendents in the following excerpts illustrate the importance of fundamental religious beliefs in engendering trust and loyalty in others.

Luke

Luke stated he wanted the same things in a work situation as in his family: "Honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness are important. I guess, coming from a Catholic dimension as well, I think the Gospel values are very important" (Luke, p. 4). The nature of his school system required he not only espouse those values, but also practice them in his dealings with others. For Luke, this meant accepting others' points of view and their own values. However, this acceptance caused Luke to feel as though he was "walking an interesting tightrope at times" (Luke, p. 5) for, while others' opinions and values had to be tolerated and accepted, the overall direction of the school system still had to be followed. When Luke reflected on the degree to which he had been successful in "walking the tightrope", he noted his greatest achievement was that "we've been able to bring people together to create an environment were they can interact and work together with a minimum of conflict. We're all focused on the same goals and mission statement" (Luke, p. 7).

While Luke experienced some frustration over the lack of consensus from the Board regarding long-range planning, he was able to exercise substantial discretionary authority and influence to shape the direction for the school system. In exercising this discretion, Luke reported to the Board on what he had done and actively sought out the Board's reaction: "I would say to the Board, 'I do not have any direction in terms of what your priorities are. Here are the things we are doing. If you do not like them, tell me.' And, nobody ever told me that they did not like them" (Luke, p. 9). The primary criteria Luke used to assess rightness of his actions in this discretionary environment was based on doing the best for students: "Anything that we do, kids have to be the number one priority" (Luke, p. 9).

Luke also modeled a strong sense of morality, ethics, and caring in his dealings with a teacher who had multiple sclerosis. Caught in a moral dilemma in which he was forced to make choices which could have a negative effect either upon the teacher concerned or on the children for whom she was responsible, Luke chose to identify a win-win situation for both. Having first provided an opportunity to the teacher to work part time and collect disability insurance for the remainder, Luke found this solution unacceptable to both the teacher and the students. A new solution had to be found and the solution was based on continuous long term disability.

Two considerations guided Luke in his decision-making. In the first, Luke acted in accordance with his belief that "you have to do [what is best for students]. But, I still think you try to do it without--I think you try to be considerate of the individual as much as you can be" (Luke, p. 24). In the second, Luke stressed the importance of Catholic values: "There is a strong spiritual base to those [types of decisions], but I guess in terms of how I want to be treated and how I want to treat other people, and they go back to the whole business of integrity and honesty, and fairness and compassion" (Luke, p. 25).

This attitude of students as the main priority of the system caused some degree of conflict between the system administration and school-based administrators and their teaching staffs. As Luke noted, the self-interest of those groups sometimes got in the way of the primary focus of the system; however, this did not mean the interests of those groups were not considered: "You help teachers be able to do their jobs by being considerate of them as well" (Luke, p. 10).

Leonard

In a similar vein, Leonard believed the rightness of decisions stemmed from the fundamental belief that the school system existed to provide services to its students. Thus, decisions had to be assessed for rightness in terms of their positive effect upon the students: "I would say this belief came from inside myself [and I told the Board during my interview] that I wanted to make the district the best place for kids that we could possibly make it" (Leonard, p. 10). Just as importantly, Leonard also told the Board, "The system itself should be a good place for people to work, that teachers could work in cooperation with parents, and, as Central Office, we would do our best to facilitate that process" (Leonard, p. 10). Leonard felt that without this fundamental belief, issues could tend to become clouded with the probable consequences of individual good supplanting the common good.

Notwithstanding his belief in the primacy of decisions for students, Leonard also advocated a strong belief in the value of individuals and that decisions should not detract from the personal dignity and worth of the individual. Leonard also believed strongly in modeling and stated, "I think that's very important [and] by example, by competence, you're going to build on strengths of your administrators and what you expect them to do" (Leonard, p. 58). Leonard offered other insights as to how he assessed the rightness of decisions and actions. Consistent with his belief in the primacy of students, Leonard noted, "[Assessing the rightness of a decision] goes back to what's the impact on your school and the impact on your kids. I think it's got to be a priority. . . . If you don't have a focus on what is right and what is right for people, then I think you've got real difficulty" (Leonard, p. 45). In choosing between undesirable options, Leonard noted rightness of decisions had to be judged against a fundamental principle: "You've got to have some belief that there's something that's number one in order to make those decisions. Even though they're difficult decisions, and hard decisions, you still know the rightness of it because of what your mission is" (Leonard, p. 47).

Honesty and integrity were very important to Leonard in assessing the rightness of decisions, for both pragmatic and principled reasons. Noting one can not always feel good about decisions which may have a negative effect upon individuals, Leonard believed one can always feel the decisions were right if the mission and focus of the school system have been used as the basis of the decisions. Another criterion was used to assess the rightness of decisions:

> You might have more problems--well, I don't know if you would have--doing the right thing. Personally you won't, in terms of your integrity. If you're doing the right thing you can get to sleep at night; there's no problem with that. It's when you're not doing the right thing. I think if you do things right, it's hard to keep track of exactly what were the right things that you did. To me, honesty in terms of making decisions is really important. My memory is too bad to not do things honestly. (Leonard, pp. 47-48)

In the following response, Leonard discussed the view that honesty was more than simple preference: It was also based on both principles and pragmatism:

> It probably does [go deeper than simple preference]. . . . But, it's a matter of keeping things in proper perspective and doing things that you can feel good about yourself and you can feel good about. I think, in the times that we live in, you

> don't feel good about everything, and it's just a matter of trying to operate within that whole [general framework of principles]. (Leonard, p. 48)

In relation to his own practice as superintendent, Leonard did not want to be viewed as a "twit" (Leonard, p. 28) by those over whom he had authority. As superintendent, Leonard sought to control those factors he thought were important, just as he himself wished to be treated by others. As he stated,

> I don't particularly like having people above me who are twits and, [as superintendent], I can control those factors: that you treat people with dignity; that you can make sure that decisions, even though they may be unpleasant, can be for the greatest good for everybody and people can understand that; and that you can get their cooperation and their support. (Leonard, p. 29)

Henry

Henry spoke of his religious upbringing and noted this had resulted not only in a strong desire to serve others, but also carried with it a responsibility to "leave the woodpile a little higher than you found it" (Henry, p. 5). In deciding what was right, Henry spoke of his determination to do what is best for students on a regular and systematic basis. In a manner much like Luke and Leonard, Henry stated his decision-making was based on "what is best for kids. What is best for our education system. We're not here to serve teachers; we're here to serve students" (Henry, p. 22).

In his story, Henry described the contract termination of a teacher and a bus driver. He specifically noted he felt his actions were right because they were taken in the best interests of the students and the school system. The teacher and bus driver had been involved in the community for a significant period of time and Henry knew the terminations would have a major effect upon their lives. He proceeded to recommend termination despite having reservations.

The reservations affected him to such an extent that he telephoned another superintendent to determine how that superintendent assessed rightness. As Henry stated,

> I felt really bad for that bus driver that we fired. In fact, I'll admit, I guess when the pressure really got on me, I almost wavered that time with that bus driver. And then I talked to another superintendent and he said, "You grab your ass with both hands and you hang on", because we had done the right thing. (Henry, p. 23)

Being convinced of the rightness of one's actions was one thing; implementing the decision was another: "There's an awful conflict between dealing with a person as another human being and making a decision against him in the better interest of kids. That really bothered me. It's true: You have to make choices" (Henry, p. 23).

Second-guessing his actions, in these instances, plagued Henry, especially when the bus driver's contract termination became a political issue. As he stated, "When you've been a bus driver here for 22 or 25 years, you can do anything you please and it's okay. We're going to pay the final bill on that one because there's two trustees running who've got a single issue" (Henry, p. 18). Not only were prospective trustees campaigning "to clean house" (Henry, p. 18), but Henry's incumbent trustees also questioned his actions:

> It doesn't matter what [the bus driver] did. Some of the [incumbent trustees] even say, "Yes, we agree. We agree now that what you did was right, but the way you did it we didn't like." I don't know what we should have done; I'm not sure yet what they mean by that. But, anyway, we've gone through some quite bad situations. So, I don't know what to look forward to after this coming election. The two people that are not running again of course were two very good supporters. So it's kind of tough. (Henry, p. 18)

Henry offered other insights about determining what is the right thing to do. In reflecting on his actions in both cases, he was convinced his actions were right since they were taken in the best interests of students:

> Yes, [doing the right thing, then, in those two cases, the bus driver and the teacher, was based on what's best for students]. As long as it doesn't violate--well, I don't know how it can violate other things. Yes, it has to be what is in the best interests of students, because that's what we're here for: We're here for the best educational interests of kids, and that's supposed to drive and guide your decisions. [All of it, all that we do, is to be driven by that], and it's got to really sink in. As long as it doesn't violate some cardinal rule or one of the Ten Commandments, I guess, then it has to be that way, or else you're not running your district according to how it should be run. (Henry, p. 23)

In another instance, Henry described the rightness of decisions in dealing with the unsatisfactory performance of a key member of the administrative team. As his story pointed out, Henry had to deal with this individual immediately after his appointment as superintendent. While the Board had assessed the situation, due to the technical nature of the individual's work, trustees had some difficulty in defining what the problem was.

Henry gathered data over the period of a year and still had to work closely with the individual. During that time period, he noted that he "tried to get changes. I tried to get him to report to me and keep me informed, but that wouldn't happen" (Henry, p. 15). Consequently, he was forced to seek outside assistance from Alberta Education and asked for recommendations to be made about financial operations and the individual concerned.

The individual subsequently resigned. As Henry stated, the resignation occurred, because "we couldn't achieve those goals and recommendations with him here and the Board could see it too" (Henry, p. 16). The stress Henry felt during this process was significant but the stress was ameliorated because "if you know you're right, it doesn't bother you as much as the ambiguity of wondering if you're right" (Henry, p. 6). Henry also felt he was eminently fair with this individual since time was given for improvements to be made, impartial assistance was provided, and formal and informal assessments of performance were made during the process. While fairness tended to be illustrative of concerns related to the exercise of natural justice, Henry was also concerned for the individual.

James

James spoke of the importance of commitment, contentment, being happy, his religious faith, and relationships with others in successfully carrying out the multiple roles as superintendent. As he stated, "I think satisfaction, contentment, with what I'm doing, contentment with being happy, and enjoying life [are important]. Friendships and relationships are important to me [and] I think a personal faith or having comfort with [the notion that] what I'm here for today has a longer life" (James, pp. 2-3). In a professional sense, James believed vision had to be articulated--a vision focusing on student learning:

> The whole idea of having a vision and a mission which focuses on the student is not something that I simply articulate. I fundamentally believe that it's possible to positively impact the learner of today and of the twenty-first century, and I guess I am personally obsessed or possessed with the notion that it's the leadership responsibility to create a vision of that, not within himself, but within the Board and, in turn, with staff and the community, that we have a job to do relative to a whole improvement plan for students. My personal [vision] ties into that, but it's predominantly professional. (James, p. 4)

James believed the vision had to be held "out there" (James, p. 49) for all to see so that the desired results, namely increased student achievement and learner empowerment, were achieved. Unfortunately, James indicated his relentless pursuit of these objectives had caused others to note he did not listen to their concerns to an appropriate degree: "Some of my critics out there say, 'You don't listen,' so my first reaction is to say, 'Oh, yes, I do listen.' On the other hand, I have to stop back and say, 'Maybe if I hear that from two or three people, what can I do to be more effective, a more effective listener'" (James, p. 7)? While commitment was both desired and expected of the superintendent, commitment which became too consuming was perceived by others as single-mindedness.

He recognized he "shouldn't let personal beliefs and values [influence me to such a degree]" (James, p. 11), but he was not prepared to back down from those beliefs. This was exemplified in the role he took in instituting a revised age of entry for grade one students in the district. While the focus of the decision was to improve instructional opportunities for students, he noted the criticism he received could have been lessened if he recommended to the Board not to proceed with the proposed revision to the policy:

> In the process of doing that, though, I have made probably some enemies. There are parents out there who say, "My child should have been able to go to school younger," aside from what the staff say. Now, you get some parents who say, "Thank you very much for doing that. I think my child has done wonderfully and will be better off for it"; others would kill if they could. (James, p. 11)

James felt the decision he had made in recommending the Board adopt the policy was the right one, since the overall end was to improve student learning:

> [We can] withstand the pressures of parent criticism [and negative] comments if we can, in the end, have more success and have [students] love their learning and feel more confident--it's all tied to our end point where we're talking about our vision. It all has to contribute to that, and it wasn't done in isolation. (James, p. 12)

The emphasis James placed on student learning, developing conditions to optimize that learning, and on securing appropriate results had to be modeled to the teachers in the district. To enhance the implementation of those changes and beliefs, James indicted one-on-one communication with teachers was undertaken and when visiting teachers "in a classroom on a drop-in visit, I use our 11 quality indicators as just a comment page, and however we can massage it" (James, p. 14).

For James, the rightness of actions was determined by assessing the degree to which the action was in the best interests of students. In those instances in which he was criticized for taking certain actions, such as recommending the Board adopt a policy precluding students who were not six years of age at the school opening date from attending school, James remained steadfast in his belief that the long-term benefits to students far outweighed the arguments offered by his detractors. Believing that ends and means could not be separated, James sought to structure actions such that they related to the goal of enhanced student achievement. However, this was not without cost and James noted teachers felt the degree of change was simply becoming too much and that they wanted to be left alone to do what they were hired to do--teach.

John

John believed doing the right things right, in both a personal and professional sense, underpinned all of his actions. Success for John was determined by "doing the job right [and by] doing the right things right" (John, p. 3). Inherent in this belief were the fundamental values of honesty, integrity, democratic processes and institutions, consultation, communication, collaboration, the correctness of the public will, vision, commitment, advocacy for public education, fairness, openness, treating others as you would like to be treated, and sincerity. As John stated, these beliefs required him to

> behave ethically, [have] interpersonal skills, [be] able to work with other people in such a way that you work successfully. [These] depend on good communication [and] upon a vision. [To] help students become the best they can be. Helping each student to reach their potential but at the same time not losing sight of society that you're talking about. Not one at the expense of another. Keep up on things. Be an advocate for education, the importance of education. Of course, in my work here, an advocate of public education. And, [to] be sensitive to others. Being consistent. (John, p. 6)

Other values were outlined:

> In the area of values: integrity, honesty, hard work, family, teamwork. Sincerity. All of those things fit into there. And, I suppose, how do you model them? Well, you try and live that way and so that's the way you are. (John, pp. 6-7)

John also recognized human frailty may result in not always being able to live up to the high standards one has set: "You try to be that kind of a person and, being human, you never are what you think you ought to be. You never achieve that goal but that doesn't make the goal wrong. It just means that you didn't do it" (John, p. 7). As superintendent, John recognized he would make mistakes. Dealing with those mistakes was also very important to John, because it emphasized dealing with others:

> When you make those mistakes, you apologize to people for making them and you let them know however, that was not your intent. Your intent was to do the right thing and to do it in the right possible way. (John, pp. 6-7)

Assessing the rightness of decisions was based on the overall vision and mission of the school system and strong moral principles which John attributed to his religious orientation. With regard to the latter, John noted,

> oh, yes, morality is there; yes, assessing rightness of it. For myself, personally, it'll come through religion. I'm a church person, and my family is too, and that's a basis of morality for me, no question about it. But in terms of the superintendent's job, I can't use a denominational interest; it has no place in it, because if you put one denomination before another within a public-school system, you're really not serving the public-school system. No, the ethics are there; they've got to stand. But I can't use my religion as the justification for it in my job. (John, p. 35)

Despite the fact John felt he could not use his denominationalism as the justification for his actions in the public school system, he felt it still provided a guide for his very fundamental beliefs. When asked if he acted in accordance with deeply held principles or because of pragmatism, John was very clear:

> That's an interesting one. I asked a grade seven kid of mine that years ago when I was teaching in a social studies class. He said, "You know, you have to do it because you believe it's right, not because of fear of consequences. The most important [belief] is that you do it because it's right" (John, p. 36).

In assessing the degree to which pragmatism and principles influenced his practice, John noted,

> I think [pragmatism is] the wrong basis to work from myself. I think being principled is the basis to work from in the end. We get into an awful lot of debates, and it really bothers me to hear people make a decision only because it'll work, it's the easy way out, or whatever. But if you argue that it's right and at the same time it's damaging somebody else, then it isn't right. (John, p. 37)

George

George, like all of the other superintendents, stressed a vision for the system and worked diligently to achieve that vision. Given that his system was Catholic, this required not only articulating elements of the Catholic faith, but also practicing those elements. As George stated,

> I know what I'd like us to be. I like to think that I'm contributing to it. The vision, why we're a Catholic school system, the vision I suppose, should have a supernatural sort of element to it. I think [people in the system] should care for each other very--and I believe very--very strongly, and make no more noise, as Catholics, by what we do than what we say. And certainly, what we say is important, because sometimes people have an opportunity to hear. That's a vision, if you like, that we do what we can to demonstrate that we care for each other. Sometimes that caring takes the form of, "You should go to another school. You are not helping yourself or us or anybody else; you'll be a better person if you leave." I try to do that with some kind of . . . . I need to live with myself. I try [to allow the individual to keep his dignity intact]. (George, pp. 30-31)

Assessment of the rightness of decisions was based on principles and a degree of pragmatism. In discussions regarding his stance on the introduction of the YNN television programming in his school system, George indicated he was torn between pragmatic concerns revolving around the acquisition of television technology at the cost of subjecting students, who were a captive audience, to commercial advertising and in maintaining the advertising and sales-free sanctity of the educational setting. His comments are instructive:

> The advertising one they might [have divergent views and interests]. But, I think with the advertising one, you know, as it stands, I think if you were to say, "What would I prefer?", I think I prefer recognition that this is 1992. On the other hand, if the Board said, "No, we don't want any part of that stuff in our schools", I can understand exactly where they're coming from and I will feel no offense if they suddenly say, "Let's change our policy!" I have given them the arguments both for and against. (George, p. 33)

Later, George spoke at length of the YNN conundrum and how his personal values came into play in making the final decision. Although the comment he made could generally apply to George's administrative values, the comment was specifically made in light of the YNN issue and it provides a valuable insight into what caused him to do the things he did:

> Like the advertising one. I think I'd like to say, "No, we've got to protect our kids from things like this." Then, over and against that [view] is that I think I better

> wake up and smell the coffee and what are kids facing 24 hours a day? So, I will say, "I'll take the free TV's and the commercials because I think that's 1992." Although, I prefer the other. Which have I totally rationalized? I don't really know. I have no idea. (George pp. 38-39)

However, George felt ideals must be considered in light of the times and context in which a person is found:

> I don't know whether I've learned in that or whether I'm expedient. I try not to be. I try to have ideals. But I don't know. Twenty years ago the offer of the television sets wouldn't have even reached the Board table, but now it's here. (George, p. 40)

George indicated that as superintendent, he had to stand for something--something which emphasized the Catholic nature of the school district, the primacy of educating students, and the caring shown for other people. However, standing for something when he made and assessed the rightness of decisions was rarely something which required conscious thought and deliberation:

> I go from day to day and I rarely take the time to think about why I'm doing things. There are days when I think that the only reason I'm doing things is to keep peace in the house. There are days when I think other things. Some are higher callings, I would think, so otherwise, where would you be? You'd be out of it! I think you have to have something. I know I put a lot of stock into what's happening to kids in schools. There's no reason under the sun for any of us if that isn't being helped in one way or another. If you ever took that away, I wonder what I would use? Somebody once said, "Don't be so stubborn!" But, if I wasn't stubborn, what would I be? I'd be so flexible I wouldn't stand for anything! (George, p. 41)

One final example illustrates George's emphasis on doing the right thing, particularly in regard to students. Asked how he assessed the rightness of decisions, he chose to answer the question in an indirect fashion and related an incident in which he was called upon to assist a new member of staff who was wrestling with that very question:

> My job on the line? Let me answer the question indirectly. We have two people who are brand new in our office in the student services department. Guidance, special needs, that kind of thing. I want them to know me and what it's like to work in a place like this. I said, "When all is finished, and you don't really know what to do, and you're really perplexed, do what you think is right and I'll back you a 100%. But, please, don't do it because you thought that's what I wanted."
>
> It was interesting because our guidance consultant came in to see me about this letter from the high school about a fight. The principal said, "I'm going to expel those kids." [Our consultant] went over, [but] before [she] left she came in and said, "I was the guidance counselor in that school last year and there's nothing wrong with those kids. They got into a fight. They shouldn't be expelled. Now, what do I tell the principal? He wants to expel them and I can't support that." I

> said, "This is when you get to be an artist. Go tell [the principal] that you're not going to back the expulsion. He's dead in the water because if he comes to me and you don't support it, I'm not going to support it. Not on your life." It turned out that she went over and by that time, the principal had cooled off. She came back and she said, "I did what I thought was right." I said, "That's why I said that." (George, p. 38)

In summing up his point of view on this issue, John stated, "I guess in my own case, [while] I'd like to tell you that I always do the right thing, there are some times when I [consider expedient options]. I like to think it doesn't and I suspect it does and I need to spend a lot of time saying 'I can live with that'" (George, p. 39).

In this statement, George revealed the essential conundrum he faced on so many issues: doing the right thing because it was the right thing to do or doing something because of expediency and pragmatism.

Thomas

Thomas articulated similar values to John and began the interview by outlining some fundamental values and beliefs he felt guided his actions as superintendent:

> Integrity is probably the key thing. Integrity, honesty, success--and when I'm referring to success, not success necessarily for me, but success experienced by those people with whom I'm in contact, with whom I work, the kids we serve. It's really important--and I'm relating this to the job that I'm fulfilling professionally. More so than personally at this point in time. It's really important for me to have a sincere sense in feeling that the community I work with, the teachers that I work with, the staff I work with, the parents, the kids--we all understand that this is a togetherness; it's a collaborative effort. (Thomas, p. 5)

The togetherness or interdependence of all the various aspects of the educational system was critically important for Thomas since he believed that harmony, in both a professional and a personal context, could come from greater understanding of and empathy for the positions of others. Although harmony in both contexts was highly desirable, Thomas indicated he was prepared to handle conflicts occurring in both personal and professional relationships:

> I like harmony. When we're dealing with people, I think you have to have an understanding that if there is a concern expressed by somebody to you in my role as a superintendent, or as a parent, or as a spouse, or as a neighbor, or as a member of society, I think we have to really appreciate that concern being expressed by that other party is legitimate; otherwise it wouldn't be expressed. I think we have to

> take time to listen; we have to take time to show empathy and to understand. (Thomas, p. 6)

In Thomas' discussion of the difficulties faced by non-resident Catholic parents in negotiations with the public school system over having their children continuing to attend schools in his jurisdiction, he indicated how principles can be and are far more important than simple pragmatism. Thomas was very aware of the potential criticisms which would be levied against his school district if it assisted parents in forming four-by-four separate districts and then seeking an amalgamation with his jurisdiction. This could be viewed as a "tax grab" by ratepayers in the public system, a not unlikely accusation since Thomas' jurisdiction was, in terms of assessment, a "have not" jurisdiction. While the additional funds obtained through potential amalgamation would be beneficial, Thomas was adamant in his view that financial gain was not a *prima facie* motive for supporting parents in their quest:

> I guess if we were to champion anything or involve ourselves in--not the promotion of it because we didn't--champion is the better word. It was based on the right to Catholic education as opposed to resolving our financial difficulties by promoting them to form as a tax grab. (Thomas, p. 27)

He spoke even more strongly on this issue:

> We're not out there trying to build the size of our school jurisdiction because we want to expand our boundaries and bring more kids into our system. You bring more kids into your system through what you have to offer them. There's credibility out there. That's a reputation that we've established. We're not driven by a motivator to financially become better off. That's personally not ever been my motivator. There's no hidden agenda here. (Thomas, p. 27)

Had the formation of the separate districts not occurred, and had the public district not supported the attendance of non-resident Catholic students in his school jurisdiction, Thomas would have faced an extreme difficulty:

> If there's ever a dilemma that I'm faced with that I have difficulty overcoming, it's dealing with the scenario, had it developed, that we suddenly charge those [public school system] resident [students] and invoice them for the tuition fee because the public system is no longer going to pay for it; that we have to charge those people to attend a publicly-funded institution. That would cause me a real hardship. Yet, at the same time, I have a responsibility to this Board who serves the ratepayer or the resident of this geographic area. If we waive those fees, then what we're saying is that "Residents, you foot the bill for those non-resident people" and that's

> not right either. I think you pay the freight in terms of what is equitable or what's right. (Thomas, p. 28)

Thomas's actions in attempting to resolve the conflict are illustrative of a value base oriented to the provision of a Catholic education as a matter of right and as a matter of being the right thing to do. However, Thomas demonstrated a belief that the circumstances of all parties had to be considered in his actions. In reflecting upon his covert involvement with the parent groups, characterized by providing moral support and information and remaining ostensibly neutral in the issue, Thomas admitted his involvement was greater than he planned it to be. While Thomas hoped to resolve the issue by remaining neutral and avoiding direct confrontation with the public school district, and, perhaps, Department of Education officials, he believed the potential disruption to his system through avoidance was greater than that accruing from becoming more actively involved. In addition, by gathering information, Thomas found the avoidance technique was becoming rapidly more unacceptable. Rationality and objectivity served only to reinforce his initial stand based on principles of what is right.

Thomas was fully aware of the competing interests which underpinned this conflict. Prime among these were financial interests, which had to be counterbalanced against the fundamental right of access of Catholic parents to a Catholic education for their children. By working quietly behind the scenes with the Catholic parent groups and his Board, Thomas felt he could simultaneously facilitate the wishes of the parents and respect the concerns of the public system. Believing his tactics were the right ones, Thomas indicated he wanted greater collaboration and accommodation rather than competition and compromise.

Thomas was caught in the conundrum facing superintendents, trustees, local governments, and indeed all others: attempting to satisfy one's own concerns while attempting to satisfy the concerns of others. Thomas' concerns revolved around the issues of access to Catholic education, maintaining the financial integrity of his school system, and the responsibility to the ratepayers of the system while simultaneously respecting the financial integrity of the public school system, combating misinformation with facts, meeting the mission of his school district, satisfying the requirements to provide leadership to the Board, combating the potential perceptions of self-servedness, and maintaining integrity, honesty, and harmony in dealings with others. Thomas' responses to resolving these multiple concerns were indicative of his strong desire for integrity, honesty, respect for situations in which others found themselves, his desire for harmony but not at all costs, and maintaining and advocating for the rights of children in general, and Catholic children in particular, to a quality education.

Other criteria were used to assess the rightness of decisions. The first, as Thomas stated, was to consider

> [the] bottom line, after all [the facts, information, and input are] put together is, "Is that going to be successful for our kids? Are we going to be hurting our kids in this decision, or are we going to be doing the best that we can for our kids in this decision?" We can't leave that out. And, whatever the bottom line shakes out to be, that's what I'll proceed with. (Thomas, p. 37)

The second criterion related to intuition:

> God only knows [what provides me with a gut feeling]. It's a level of comfort that you have, sort of a peacefulness. It's just something that you feel is the right thing to do. I can't assess [it], I can't tell you what it is. But, you have a good sense of what you've just done. (Thomas, p. 38)

The third criterion related to the degree to which his religious faith influenced decisions he made:

> When I'm faced with a tough decision in the job place, I'll often sit at that chair and just a little private conversation between the Holy Spirit, God, myself and Christ, and I ask for guidance to make the right decision, but always preface it with the right decision in terms of it impacting on those that are going to be affected in the right way. I believe in that. It's not that you don't think it's important. It's such a day-to-day thing that's there that I guess--I don't know. It's important; it's extremely important! (Thomas, p. 40)

The degree to which the emphasis on faith was to be reflected in his school system emerged in another statement Thomas made. After further reflection and discussion about a value base for decision-making, particularly the value base associated with principles and/or spiritual values, Thomas indicated he did not reflect upon this issue since "it's something that's in everything I do, it's a natural thing with me. I said earlier that I believe very strongly that I've been called to some kind of mission. I believe very strongly that the Holy Spirit guides me in what I do day-to-day" (Thomas, p. 39).

Thomas also indicated a Catholic school system had to be Catholic in terms far beyond simply teaching religion in school for 40 minutes per day. As a superintendent of a Catholic school system, he indicated he has been so inundated with secular matters that the religious priorities tended to be neglected. Thomas reflected upon a conversation he had with another Catholic superintendent to illustrate this :

> You can't identify a Catholic school because we [teach religion on a daily basis]. It struck me, as [he and I] were talking, and I said, "You know, for the past four years since I've come back [here] I got so wrapped up in that secular business that I really sort of put aside what we're all about as a Catholic school district." I said, "You know, I really screwed up my priorities. I spend 99% of my time on correspondence that relates to curriculum, that relates to policy, and the other that isn't really associated with why we exist!" (Thomas, p. 42)

As a consequence of his reflections, Thomas decided changes had to be made in both the priorities for the school system and for himself:

> Since this little thought struck me a year ago and when I said I found myself doing so much of the secular, devoting so much of my time to the secular side, I firmly believe that if we can zero in, and our priorities should be based upon what it is that we're about as a Catholic school system, the curricular stuff's going to fall into place. It's going to happen. (Thomas, p. 44)

His mission for education, in general, and for Catholic education, in particular, underscored the decisions made in this matter:

> I believe this, and it might be a personal belief, but I really think that our society's deteriorated in terms of morals and values and promiscuity. I really have a problem with what I see and read and hear, and I think that if we really don't get a handle on things again, our kids are really going to be in for some tough times. It's scary, and I think that we've got to start setting some priorities for ourselves as a society. I certainly don't think that all of society's ills can be laid at the doorstep of the school and said, "Fix it!" And that's why I said--go back to the first thing I said in this conversation--we need that collaborative effort, and if you don't have it, pity the kid who doesn't have that follow-up at school, and pity the kid who doesn't have that same follow-up at home. (Thomas, p. 45)

In the context of society, in general, but in the context of the Catholic education system, in particular, Thomas felt that unless a concept of broadly-based morality was taught and modeled to children, consequences would be extremely negative. Thus, the importance of the spiritual component for Thomas and his school system and became extremely evident in actions chosen and decisions made. In summing up his view of the degree to which spiritual values influenced his practice in the superintendency, he stated,

> maybe I went overboard on this spiritual thing but as I said, I guess you take that for granted when it's there; it's not something that you work at. I can't understate the spiritual. That's probably the focal point of my existence. (Thomas, p. 46)

Peter

Peter's initial discussion of his fundamental beliefs showed a strong religious conviction. Acknowledging the fundamental belief in the value and importance of Catholic education had been modeled to him at an early age by his father, Peter felt an equal responsibility to model these things to others: "[My father] never had to say to us, 'I believe in Catholic education.' He told us every day of the year. Two hundred times a year he'd drive us to school. With that kind of upbringing, I'm just really excited about what we can do in Catholic education" (Peter, p. 9). Not surprisingly, Peter placed great importance on providing service to children: "My objectives still revolve around what we can do for kids and I think if I ever lose that, I've got to get the hell out of this business because I don't think I should be here if that's not my reason" (Peter, p. 8). He made an even stronger statement about his sense of mission as superintendent:

> Not only do I like kids, but I also want them to do well. I want something to happen to them that I believe I've received and that is--I'll use the word education--a good grounding. I believe that we in education can make a profound impact on kids, and that's what motivates me. (Peter, p. 15)

The theme of doing what is best for students, in a Catholic context, emerged continually in Peter's conversation. The extent to which this fundamental belief influenced his practice and practices in the school district is best illustrated by his own words:

> It's found right in our mission statement right at the front of our policy handbook, and it's believed in. Of course, we have a new Board coming on, so it's going to take us some time for people to get used to the way we operate, but right off the bat we say that children are God's gift to the world, and we have a tremendous responsibility when we work with our young. Everything flows from there. We don't come up with a plan to do something that doesn't fall in line with doing the best we can for kids. We're going to make it revolve around, "What can we do best for kids?" It has more of a Catholic slant to it, but it revolves around kids. If it doesn't, then we're here for the wrong reasons. (Peter, p. 19)

He also felt his involvement in the community always had to reflect the responsibility he had as superintendent of schools. He articulated this responsibility as leading by example:

> I have a high standard, high expectations for myself, and I think that's one of the things that I can say about our [superintendent] colleagues in education. I haven't met many superintendents that I don't really admire. Their work ethic is really strong; their attention to kids is profound, awesome. Lots of our colleagues will do lots of things to get the best for kids. That's high on my list as well. (Peter, p. 4)

Believing he had to model a high level of energy and a strong commitment to children, Peter spent great amounts of time in attempting to meet this expectation for himself. He went further in describing his professional orientation:

> My integrity is very important to me, both obviously personally, but especially professionally. As a matter of fact, I just received my review for last year and I would be really unhappy if [trustees] felt I had misplaced their trust in my integrity. So, I work at that really hard. I try to be straightforward and honest and caring at the same time. I don't feel I have to tell everybody everything, but at the same time, if I tell them something, I believe it. (Peter, p. 4)

Also, Peter felt a strong commitment to practicing his faith in both a personal and a professional context, but not without some degree of cost:

> I guess that's where I end up making other people uncomfortable, in this community particularly. I would be recognized as a very strong member of our parish, very, very heavily involved. I'm involved with most of the ministries within our parish at some level or another; I'm just always involved. It's not personal and it's not professional; it's both. I'm not there because I'm the superintendent; I would be there anyway. But I'm also there because I'm the superintendent because I believe I show by being a servant as well. (Peter, p. 5)

In his dealings with others, Peter felt he must respect individual worth, demonstrate empathy for the other person's situation, and find a right resolution to issues. Having high expectations and standards for himself, Peter expected no less, in matters both secular and religious, from others who served children. These high expectations may have caused others to feel uncomfortable about their own performance, but he was not prepared to sacrifice his own principles to make these individuals feel more comfortable with their own inadequacies.

Peter's bottom line, like that expressed by the other superintendents, in making educational decisions was clearly stated:

> The most satisfying decisions are those that you can sit and look at the teacher right in the eye and say, "We made that decision for those kids. I'm sorry it doesn't meet your expectations." As soon as you start making decisions for teachers, based on what's best for teachers, you always run into trouble. Whereas if we say we do it for the kids, it always seems to work out right. (Peter, p. 44)

For Peter, the fallback for decisions, even if those decisions had a negative effect upon teachers, was the benefit to the student. At the political level, Peter operated from the same fundamental value orientation. When asked what caused him to argue passionately over issues at the Board table, Peter was quick to respond: "Kids! If it affects a child and I don't believe what we are doing is right for a child, then I would be prepared to really [argue]" (Peter, p. 47).

Peter felt that trust, in all cases, was the single largest determiner of forming agreements and proceeding with right action: "I think we operate on a level of [trust]--or I could say we provide good information and that kind of thing. But, it comes down to trust. Do we trust each other?" (Peter, p. 45).

In Board meetings, Peter felt he had to speak to certain issues to emphasize both service to students and the Catholic nature of the school system:

> I really want the Board members to know where I'm coming from, and I will often just simply say--I wouldn't use the terms "How would Christ do it?"--but I'd say, "We do things different in Catholic education," because usually when new Board members come in they've got kind of a business slant to things, and I say, "Well, you know, in Catholic education. . . ." I said, "You know, in Catholic education sometimes we don't do things that make the most business sense." But I said, "When you're doing it for children, sometimes you've just got to do it!" (Peter, p. 47)

Peter also indicated he would take people to task if situations arose involving unfair treatment to students, trustees, and others which would result in the diminishing of an individual's basic human dignity. As he indicated,

> the Boards have all been really good about [this]. But I've taken them to task sometimes. I've said, "Hey, you guys, you don't treat each other right. This is a Catholic organization. We should be treating each other in a Christ-like manner." (Peter, p. 48)

Peter had experienced success in dealing with the Boards in such instances and had been praised by a Board Chairman for imparting certain beliefs and methods to the Board. In Peter's words,

> I guess I do have a good enough reputation, and certainly that was borne out again yesterday when I heard the Chairman of the Board say how [I] had influenced him so much in the area of Catholic education. I guess I've been around long enough that people have said, "Well, I guess his record is pretty good. This is not the first year he's done it." I'm starting [another] year as a superintendent of Catholic education, so I guess they figure, "Well, he's been around for a while." I guess that's where experience kind of comes in handy. (Peter, p. 48)

The Interpretive Context

What meanings can we draw from the language of these superintendents about their value base, about the assessment of rightness in decisions, and about modeling their beliefs to others? All the superintendents stressed the idea of integrity--a sense of oneness, or being a whole person in their practice. In the responses of these superintendents to matters of choice and making decisions, a sense of rightness was expressed--rightness based on deeply held principles as opposed to simply reacting to the demands of the particular situation in which they found themselves. This is not to say however, that situational and contextual variables were not considered. Indeed, these situational and contextual variables were extremely important since they represented a strong tendency to weight the effects of decisions on others. Personal traits, based on these deeply held principles, included honesty, trustworthiness, caring, a deeply held sense of mission, and a concomitant vision for the school system.

Invariably, all of the superintendents had strong religious beliefs yet none of the superintendents advanced the view that the religious underpinnings were, in and of themselves, sufficient to exercise due and careful leadership in their school system. Indeed, one superintendent specifically stated he could not use his religious beliefs as the basis for justifying his actions to others. The non-denominational nature of the public school system precluded this. The religious nature of the Catholic system required it, but more was involved than simply articulating religious beliefs--being a superintendent in a Catholic system meant practicing the Gospel values and the tenets of Christianity.

The superintendents also expressed a strong set of personal and ethical standards--principally those of fairness, caring, and honesty. In a manner strikingly similar to that stated in the interpretive context and summary of the first theme, it is conjectured that these values provided an inner sense of direction, a compass, developed through life experiences and, in many cases, formative upbringing, to guide the superintendents in their administrative work. As George stated, "What would I be if I wasn't stubborn? I'd be so flexible, I wouldn't stand for anything. I don't have much choice. I'm going to stay that way" (George, p. 41).

The practice component of these beliefs was critically important to all of the superintendents. They set examples of the behaviours they wished to see in others, particularly in dealings with students, parents, and teachers. In many cases, the values they held were unconsciously used in evaluating situations and determining courses of action to be taken. As both Peter, George, and Thomas noted in regard to their religious values as a base for decision-making, but especially Peter, "[It's] another assumption that I wouldn't explain because it's just there automatically" (Peter, p. 57). The use of these values in modeling behaviour and in making decisions did not preclude the use of analytical processes. Indeed, Peter said it best:

> I try to balance that against my experience, what else has happened, and certainly, of course, bringing into, almost like a filter, the School Act or other legislation or legal aspects or whatever. Of course, our policy handbook is also more or less like a legal document. And then, I guess, trying to make a decision from there. (Peter, p. 53)

All superintendents expressed an overarching and perhaps compelling vision for the school system which focused on the delivery of services to children. The value of making decisions in the best interests of children was invariably the "bottom line" for assessing options and efficacy of options chosen and implemented. What is best for children was, however, determined by the personal prejudices of the superintendents involved; those in this study had remarkably similar prejudices including, but not limited to, superior academic performance, instilling appropriate life skills and beliefs to create a well educated citizenry, treating children differently than adults, and ethical concerns which addressed both the communitarian good and individual rights .

To a very large extent, the personal vision of the superintendents was, as James noted, "held out there" for all to see so others would eventually share the same vision. The ultimate goal was to have others develop increased commitment and effort to the cause of educating children. Perhaps the importance of family, addressed in the first section, applies to the organization itself in addition to the personal family of each of the superintendents. Thus, the oneness, usually characterizing families, can be extrapolated to a oneness within the educational organization--in essence, an educational family, pulling together for the mutual benefit of all.

The personal value base of the superintendents and the vision they had, while separate and capable of being examined, appear to be inextricably linked for the reason that the type of educational system they wanted was simply an expression of the value base they held. By making decisions, turning thoughts into actions, the superintendents could affect the system so that the system became progressively more like the one the superintendent envisioned. Rightness of decision-making was thus determined by the type of organization wanted and envisioned.

Summary

Universally, these superintendents articulated a fundamental religious faith which served as the foundation for their personal value system. As discussed in theme one, the notion of integrity required them to act in accordance with these beliefs in their professional practice as well. Interestingly, a difference which emerged was the degree to which the religious beliefs were so unconscious in the Catholic superintendents that they seldom consciously thought about these as they made decisions. Of the Catholic superintendents, only Thomas spoke of his reflections on this matter in a conscious sense. For others, but particularly for Peter, the intense commitment to his faith as an element in his decision-making was so unconscious that he chose not to mention it in the interview until he was directly asked for his views on this matter.

Deeply held professional principles, especially the belief in the primacy of students and the impact of decisions on others, were also very important to these superintendents. Other values were also expressed. Prime among these were fairness, caring, and honesty. Through articulating and, more importantly, practicing these values, they set examples of behaviours they wished to see in others. Another strong professional value emerged: the importance of articulating a vision for the system and setting high standards necessary to achieve it.

Personal and professional values were entwined to such an extent that each was reflected in the other. Shaped by experience, knowledge, early upbringing, successes and mistakes, a strong sense of responsibility, a desire to serve others, a view of seeking perfection while recognizing perfection can never be achieved, a view of the educational community as a broad or extended family, and high ethical standards, the character of the superintendents emerged as a major contributor to the success of their educational systems.

Theme Three: Building Agreements and Reconciling Political Interests

Introduction

Process and substance, the perennial dialectic faced by leaders in any organization, require leaders to come to grips with working directly to get the right answer to a problem and working on the right way to get an answer to a problem. The dichotomy emphasizes the difficulties inherent in answering the what and the how of decisions to be made. While superintendents and the political body they serve can and do make bureaucratic and hierarchical decisions affecting others, sometimes in a unilateral fashion, there is significant doubt whether decisions made in this way represent the interests of others or take into account the effects of those decisions on other people.

Luke

In dealing with the Board, Luke stressed the importance of trust, forthrightness, integrity, and honesty. He felt these were put to the test in an instance in which one trustee continued to direct him to take particular courses of action with which the entire Board had not agreed. By confronting the individual trustee and stating that he worked for the Board rather than for individual trustees and by discussing the issue at the Board table, Luke was able to successfully rely upon the Board's support. However, Luke felt these types of situations could be extremely draining, particularly when one trustee was committed to dismissing the superintendent. While Luke worked very hard at establishing relationships with trustees based on values previously mentioned, he felt the "fight" to deal with recalcitrant trustees must be joined at a higher level in which the Board itself must also demonstrate similar values.

Luke's implicit beliefs were reflected in his descriptions of developing Board agendas, the processes he used to actively seek out the opinions of trustees during Board meetings, and the process used to deal with a recalcitrant trustee. In reflecting upon his own decision-making style, Luke frequently mentioned a strong value base but recognized he required additional skill in examining the consequences of choices he made, particularly in regard to human and fiscal resources.

A key area for agreement making for Luke was reflected in the influence the mission statement and priorities for the system had in shaping a common direction. As he commented, "We've been able to bring people together to create an environment where they can interact and work together with a minimum of conflict. I think we're all focused on the same goals and mission statement . . . " (Luke, p. 7). The mission statement represented, as Luke stated, "a collective belief" (Luke, p. 14) which served as the basis for developing agreements. Using the goals and mission statement as the basis for action, Luke actively sought the involvement of others in developing a strategic plan for the school system. The success of adopting the mission statement as a source for agreements was reflected in comments made by consultants engaged in an evaluation activity: "[The consultant] couldn't believe the staff support and the staff knowledge of that component of our school district, knowing the mission statement" (Luke, p. 14).

Unfortunately, the involvement of the Board in this process was minimal and the reason for this tended to be the Board's disposition to be reactive rather than proactive. Because of this, attention was devoted to immediate and short term issues resolution. Getting the Board's agreement to change focus was extremely difficult for, as Luke noted, "You have people working all day and have difficulty getting away to a planning session. You have some who don't see any value in it" (Luke, p. 8). Given the difficulties, Luke felt it appropriate to inform the Board about actions taken and results achieved. While the Board chose not to be actively involved in the planning process, it trusted Luke to exercise his discretion in these matters to quite an extensive degree.

Also, the adoption of a Total Quality Management philosophy in the school system assisted greatly in securing agreement to adopt innovative approaches to instruction. As a consequence, Luke saw greater trust between the delivery personnel and the administrators.

Leonard

Leonard consistently stated that the students were the main focus of his efforts to plan and to budget for the school system. Consistent with this belief, Leonard advocated for and was successful in implementing a results based-orientation within the school system. However, knowing where the system was going was very important for Leonard and he purposefully involved stakeholder groups in the development of system priorities. Using the concept of the administrative team, Leonard's leadership, in the context of the team approach, was facilitative rather than authoritative and directive. Orienting the Board and the entire educational community to issues which really mattered was a focal point for Leonard, although he recognized that multiple interests were sometimes at odds with both his vision and his interpretation of the issues.

As a result of these differences, Leonard used a process which identified issues and sought cooperatively developed courses of action to resolve them. Recommendations were then given to the Board of Trustees for approval. Communication in this process, as in all others, was crucial for Leonard and he was prepared to spend considerable time in seeking consensus and agreement in the resolution of issues. Always careful not to appear to have his mind made up before decisions were ultimately made by the Board, Leonard ensured advantages and disadvantages were enumerated to the stakeholders. Knowing when to "push" and when to "back off" on issues was also important to Leonard, and he worked diligently to ensure he knew not only what the issues were, but also how much the stakeholders were prepared to support, at any one point in time, actions to be taken in the resolution of those issues.

Leonard also recognized the importance of relationships in seeking agreements from others. In this context, he chose to be viewed as facilitative and supportive rather than directive and authoritative, although he viewed authority as being derived from credibility and competence rather than position and power. His relationships with trustees were also important in this regard as can be seen by examining his strategy in getting approval to hire another teacher:

> The mayor here is very concerned about the school system taking too much of the money from the coffers and that they don't have enough money to do their roads and so on, and the school system is a "bottomless pit" of spending. He likes to use that term. He's just an excellent, well-thinking type of individual. He's had a strong academic background and very logical, an engineer type, but it's dollars and cents rather than things. As I indicated previously, we had a 3% increase in our enrolment this year. We were able to accommodate most of the kids without hiring any additional teachers from the budget, and probably could have done that without any changes. However, I felt that with our grade ones, that we had three classes of grade ones with 26 and 27 kids in them. That was too large. (Leonard, pp. 18-19)

Leonard knew the enrolments in the grade one classes were too large and began seeking a solution to the problem. Although he was constrained by the existing budget, which did not reflect an enrolment increase, Leonard took advantage of a number of other options: voluntary changes in the full-time equivalency of some staff members; reallocation of existing staff to positions where need was greatest; and the additional revenue caused by the enrolment increase to find additional funds. These options allowed him to engage staff, thus reducing the size of the grade one classes. The school principal and the school staff felt the additional staff member was necessary and they supported Leonard in his analysis. However, the final decision rested with the Board of Trustees and Leonard described the meeting in general and the comments made by one trustee:

> So I went in, and we had a special meeting with the Board. I probably fought for an hour, particularly with the one person, the mayor, [who said], "Logically, you had budgeted for one more student in grade one back in April, and now you have one student less, even though you've got 30 more kids in the system. There is no reason. You felt you could have lived with it then; you can live with it now." I went through the arguments and he just didn't feel that was logical at all, but I won it [with] the Board. He voted against it. He wrote me a note as I was sitting there saying--because we only had four of the six trustees present--he said, "If I'd have had the other two trustees here, you would have lost." He wrote me that note and passed it to me, and I just wrote a note on the bottom saying, "They're much more logical than you. I still would have won," and passed it back to him. He laughed, but he's very logical. (Leonard, p. 20)

Leonard did not mention his strong orientation to the provision of the best services possible to students as the basis for his argument with the Board but it was highly evident in the background provided to the interviewer. In this instance, Leonard described the outcome as a "Win" and the trustee felt that he had lost. Leonard was able to defuse the situation through use of a sense of humor because he felt his relationships with trustees was such that the situation was not problematic. As Leonard noted,

> those are the kinds of things that can cause you stress, obviously, yet by using maybe a sense of humor and that kind of thing, it can alleviate that a bit too. Defuse it. So, I'm lucky to be able to do that on many occasions and have an excellent relationship with trustees. (Leonard, p. 20)

While the substance of the agreement was better educational opportunities for students, his relationship with trustees, particularly his ability to use humour to defuse situations, was instrumental in obtaining the agreement to engage additional staff.

Of particular concern for Leonard was seeking agreements on ways to adapt to fiscal constraints while simultaneously providing better educational opportunities to students. As he stated, "You have to look at different ways in which you can make up for that, look at different strategies so that you can constantly work within that" (Leonard, p.

21). By providing flexibility to decision-makers in the delivery system, by involving others in decision-making, by examining alternatives provided by others, and by adopting a positive attitude toward innovations, Leonard sought to create the basis for agreements in his school system.

The adoption of numerous changes in the school system was not easily accomplished, but they were accomplished with the agreements of those most affected by the changes. Always, these changes had substance: the adoption of innovation to facilitate student learning. Always, these innovations were accomplished with due consideration given to process. A key element in both was the strategic and operational planning process undertaken in the system. While the Board ultimately approved the three year plan for the system, the partners in the educational enterprise had significant opportunities for input in the plan. The result, as Leonard noted, was "very much a cooperative type of planning document that we use" (Leonard, p. 12).

Fiscal restraints precluded doing all that was perceived to be desirable, and participants in the planning process were thus focused on doing that which was most important. Leonard noted the time-consuming nature of this task but was adamant about its importance because "when it comes down to reductions, you've got that set, that mental set, that 'Hey, we're going to cooperatively make sure that we can operate our system too, financially'" (Leonard, p. 15). Leonard's view of the importance of the agreement building process was made very clear in one statement:

> I would say [I] probably [spend a considerable amount of time seeking that degree of consensus or building those agreements]. I've met with community groups on that. I go around talking to the Parent Advisory Committees at the schools. I have a very good feel for what our community wants. We do regular school evaluations; we do regular sets of surveys out to parents where they indicate their priorities and their concerns and indicate areas where they feel that we should be working harder to achieve things, and we implement this. (Leonard, p. 15)

Perhaps the reason behind Leonard's success in establishing consensus and agreement was the importance placed on those things for which the system existed:

> We really haven't had any conflict. The Board is extremely concerned that classes are kept to a reasonable size, that teachers are able to work within those classrooms,

> and that the public here, too, views schools as being manageable. I think we're consistent in terms that we want our schools to have good discipline, that school should be a safe place for kids to go to school, that there shouldn't be fighting, so the discipline is fairly clear in terms of standards, and that makes it a better place for teachers to teach and kids to go to school and feel comfortable. (Leonard, p. 15)

Henry

Henry, like all of the superintendents in the study, chose to emphasize the importance of the district mission statement in obtaining agreements for courses of action to be taken: "What else can you say? The best possible educational program and the individual student are important; the input of the staff and the public. For excellence" (Henry, p. 8)! Prioritizing actions, on the basis of the mission statement, was a process fraught with difficulties, since self-interest often got in the way of obtaining widespread agreement on those priorities. Henry indicated the agreement seeking process was widespread and involved the staff and the principals:

> Certainly there was discussion and picking and choosing. I involved the principals in identifying priorities for . . . the 1992-93 school term. They had suggestions; not all of them wound up on the paper. [Deciding what not to include was done] on the basis of, finally, what I considered most important and what the Board considered most important. You have to delete some. They wanted to give an awful lot of emphasis to providing additional support structures to teachers who are getting increasingly heavy loads. . . . The principals certainly saw a need to provide more support. (Henry, p. 12)

Agreement was "reluctantly and grudgingly" (Henry, p. 13) reached, and Henry argued the decision represented the "big picture" (Henry, p. 13) not necessarily seen by teachers and principals. In regard to the big picture, Henry felt he must always be fiscally responsible for two reasons. The first, as Henry stated, was

> you have to do the best you can to provide the best possible educational program you possibly can within the financial limits that you are provided with, that you have. You can't run your educational program on credit or on air. It's as simple as that. It costs dollars, and the secret is to make every one of those dollars stretch as far as you possibly can. (Henry, p. 14)

The second reason was more self-serving for Henry, although it was equally pragmatic:

> The dollars tell the tale. You can't run a school district on a deficit; you have to make the dollars add up. And sooner or later as a superintendent you come to that

> realization that if you can't do it, they're going to get somebody who can. (Henry, p. 14)

Seeking agreement with the Board, on some matters, was relatively easy. On other matters, it was far more difficult. In regard to the former, a number of instances were cited to illustrate ease in achieving agreements. One such instance involved a key member of the administrative team whose performance was less than satisfactory. The Board readily agreed with Henry's strategy of involving Alberta Education in a review of this person's department, documenting evidence, working with the individual to seek changes and improvements in performance, and in the actions taken to remove the person from his position. As Henry, stated, "[The trustees were not] wrong in their [initial] assessment of the situation but they could not define it very well" (Henry, p. 15). After the review, which "zeroed in" (Henry, p. 15) on the deficiencies of the individual and after the deficiencies were not corrected, the individual left the employment of the school district because "we couldn't achieve those goals or recommendations with him here and the Board could see it too" (Henry, p. 16). Agreement to proceed was based on principles of accountability, performance, and trustworthiness.

In regard to matters in which difficulty was encountered in seeking agreement from the Board, Henry identified the manner in which he was treated by the Board as a significant problem. While he was expected to treat others with dignity, respect, and fairness, and provide them with appropriate recognition and feedback, he could not get the agreement necessary to have the Board treat him in the same manner:

> It's the lack of satisfaction and support from the Board. . . . Very few trustees ever bother to thank you or to express satisfaction. They just don't bother. I guess I can understand that and handle that. I've got a note down here that says, "Who should I thank today?" and I look at that every day, because you have to keep that in mind. You have to express appreciation. To get the most out of people you have to continually express appreciation and build them up. But who builds me up? (Henry, p. 26)

Notwithstanding Henry's inability to have the Board agree to treat him in a manner consistent with the way he treated others, Henry felt a strong obligation to fulfill his professional responsibilities to build agreements for other actions at the Board level. One of the primary methods Henry employed was to offer as much information as the Board felt was necessary to acquire a background on issues and to provide trustees with written recommendations for action. A strong team approach was used in agenda preparation and members of his administrative staff were increasingly called on to review material and to "carry the can" in the Board meetings by speaking to their own recommendations. The same process was used in agenda follow-up after the Board meeting was completed.

In addition to offering information and recommendations, Henry worked individually with trustees, particularly the Board Chairman, although he recognized the limited potential this had for getting messages to all of the trustees. Further, Henry's ability to influence the agreement building process at the Board level was constrained by a poor relationship he had with one trustee. Indeed, Henry did not go out of his way to improve the relationship and the trustee did "not get very much of my attention. I avoid that person. The more information you give him, the more he's going to cut you in the back with it" (Henry, p. 29). Henry knew there could be long-term consequences of this approach but persisted nonetheless:

> It's a no-win situation. But, anyway, I know I'm guilty of that, and I guess I've also learned to be awfully careful not to show favoritism to trustees. You tend to consult those who are most supportive [and do your work with them]. [But], it's a mistake. Maybe you can do it and get away with it; maybe someday it's going to get you. (Henry, p. 29)

Henry adopted a consultative process with others in the system to seek agreement on actions to be taken for issue resolution. His point of view in these discussions strongly reflected compromise: "So often when you hear the other side--it changes your point of view a little bit. It's usually not a life-and-death matter, and therefore, there is room for compromise" (Henry, p. 31). The consultative process was premised, to a very large degree, on the assumption that commonly agreed upon goals would provide the framework for making agreements.

To a certain extent, Henry saw himself as a "pleaser" (Henry, p. 32), one who attempted to keep people happy. He felt that keeping people happy was a high priority for him in his role as superintendent. On the other hand, Henry also felt this desire to please people or to keep them happy was a weakness, and the consequences could be quite negative since pleasing one group or individual could alienate another: "If you settle it with one guy, and then the other guy over here gets unhappy, you haven't solved a damn thing" (Henry, p. 33).

In regard to this last concern, Henry gave an example of a conflict situation which arose in one elementary school over the issue of peanut butter. Approximately five students in the school were diagnosed with a severe peanut butter allergy and the school and district moved to have the school declared "peanut butter free". Needless to say, banning peanut butter from the school was not universally accepted by the parents or students. Henry described the situation:

> Some parents took offense to that: "Why can't my kid bring peanut butter to school?" and the issue got really stinky and big, and of course there were these other parents who have kids with peanut butter allergies, and those kids can't even touch a doorknob that had peanut butter on it. So I tell you, I hurriedly dropped everything else and got on the phone talking to this side and that side and so on, and we soon discovered, the thing to do is to have a meeting, call everybody together. We did that. The two or three people who were taking offense to this peanut butter-free school were [quite difficult] but at least after they'd heard the situation and they had been given a chance to express their concerns, listen to or talk to and so on, they felt better; they had been heard. (Henry, p. 33)

The outcome of the issue was to have the school declared "peanut butter free", an outcome with broad, if not universal, acceptance by parents, teachers, and students. A second outcome was a reaffirmation of the conflict resolution strategy Henry implemented in the school district. The peanut butter case was resolved by inviting all parties involved in the issue to a joint meeting to discuss and air their concerns before any actions were taken.

Restructuring the grade configurations in the school was another contentious issue in which Henry took the lead in sponsoring numerous public meetings to explore alternatives and raise concerns. Unfortunately, the Board left Henry to "carry the can" in the issue and trustees absented themselves from the public meetings. While Henry knew he had the "thing under control" (Henry, p. 38), trustees did not feel so confident: "They were worried that there'd be an uprising" (Henry, p. 38). The heat was Henry's to take since he had initiated the discussions. In this agreement building process, Henry felt that "trustees are politicians: They react rather than proact, and sometimes, they really only move to save their own ass[es]" (Henry, p. 38).

Throughout his story, Henry indicated he was plagued by doubts about his recommended courses of action because a key player in the agreement building process--the Board, heavily influenced by a trustee who condemned Henry's leadership--could not be counted on to offer support for Henry's proposals. Second guessing his own leadership did not paralyze Henry although it did constrain significantly his feelings of security and ability to provide leadership in obtaining agreements to proceed.

James

James' story, remarkably similar to Henry's, highlighted the need for an overarching mission or vision, commonly held and supported by others, as the basis for agreeing on courses of action to take. For James, the mission or vision had to "focus on the student" (James, p. 4) and, as superintendent, he had to "pay attention to [a] whole range of things; it's a matter of orchestrating" (James, p. 4). As a consequence, James saw his role as providing direction for the school system, "moving towards improvement" (James, p. 5) and away from the status quo. At the Board level, James noted those who had engaged him as superintendent were "fundamentally in agreement with some basic philosophy and principles, and it is almost uncanny to see that" (James, p. 31). He outlined some fundamental requirements for building agreements and making decisions in his school system:

> I want to have a trusting environment to the point where--so that if a person has a responsibility for a decision and makes it--I can trust them with that, and if they've made a mistake, not to crucify or that, to let people live with their mistakes. The [second] is to work largely by consensus. Not everyone will agree, even at our administrative level, but everyone needs to have the opportunity to feel that their position is heard and feel that even in a decision that didn't go a particular way, fairly comfortable to say, "I had my opportunity." (James, p. 32)

Unfortunately, James' commitment to improvement, focusing on the student, and moving away from the status quo were perceived as overloading others ("sometimes people think we have too many things going on" [James, p. 6]) and single-mindedness wherein James did not pay close enough attention to the concerns of others ("some of my critics out there say, 'You don't listen'" [James, p. 7]).

Adopting a revised school entry age and reconfiguring the grades housed in various schools were areas in which James did not secure broad-based community agreement to proceed. Indeed, the criticism was such that it prejudiced his relationships with the community, one trustee, and trustee candidates. While James believed that "today, seemingly, most of [the criticism] is gone. Most of the people say, 'Yes, it's really working'" (James, p. 14), he was also aware of secret meetings being held within the community to create political pressure to overturn decisions made in both areas. While James' vision focused on students and enhancing their learning opportunities, people in the community were saying, "The way we can stop a decision like K to Six schools would be to get rid of the superintendent" (James, p. 15).

In the context of agreements, those outside the Board office viewed James as "ramming things down [the Trustees'] throats" (James, p. 15) and, while James felt the "Board doesn't view it that way" (James, p. 15), he also recognized that "when you look behind it, I have been behind a lot of the decisions" (James, p. 15). The consequences of the failure to achieve agreement on these vital issues were to be significant for James. As though he were prescient, he noted,

> today we don't hear any [more about the issue] other than one or two running for political office. Now, of course, my concern is if . . . on election day, we now have three of these people who got onto the Board because of the decisions I was making. Then I will have another [type] of tension that I haven't dealt with today. If I'm looking at going out of this in five or six years and it's financially really going to be a problem for me to cut that short by three--either being able to retire or not to retire, and given the fact that maybe my age is such that some jobs may not be open to me--one has to look at that. (James, pp. 16-17)

In administering the school system, James paid particular attention to the operations of the system such that these did not get in the way of the bigger things they were attempting to accomplish. In the area of agreements, one method James initiated was to have others make as many decisions as close to the point of the decisions as possible: "We don't simply impose all of the strategy components from the system plan" (James, p. 24). In this context, James saw his role as facilitative and supportive of staff while emphasizing a simultaneous need for accountability:

> I do feel that it's important to encourage them. They do have tough jobs. I want to be there to support, to encourage, also to challenge and to frustrate from time to time if [there is a] feeling that someone over a period of time is not contributing and, in fact, is maybe contrary to our vision or mission. It's my responsibility through the principals; generally, I don't do it in isolation. (James, p. 25)

John

John indicated a strong belief in the inseparability of means and ends and that ethical actions must always guide the pursuit of chosen ends, as in his description of the advice of a grade seven student long ago: "You know you have to do it because you believe it's right, not because of fear of consequences. The most important [reason] is that you do it because it's right" (John, p. 36). This did not mean that neither fear of consequences nor pragmatism did not influence John's actions. Rather, these were secondary determiners of decisions.

Value judgments made in the pursuit of those ends would not only be tempered by the values previously identified, but also by a fundamental belief in the democratic process by which the public's will is determined and acted upon through the policy process. He recognized that the Board of Trustees, because its members have been elected by the public, represented the public and the public will and that the rightness of actions in decisions made by the Board is reflected in a social justification to achieve a commonly held goal: "The value judgment comes from the democratic process [and], in a public setting, it's a social justification . . . of the goals" (John, p. 4). In this context, doing the right things meant doing those things designed to achieve the desired goals. However, in John's view, the right things had to be done in an ethical manner and not with a view of having the ends justify the means. John used this philosophy in determining his own objectives.

John had a number of objectives as they related to priorities in his superintendency. Striving to seek and build agreements based on commonly held goals and objectives, and to have individuals "throw in" to abide by the terms of the agreements, John felt these strategies enabled the system and its partners to work towards providing the best possible education for students.

John believed his primary objectives were to determine and address needs through a systematic strategic planning process and that the school district budget was the vehicle by which specific objectives would be achieved on an annual or longer term basis. Noting that superintendents should not rest on their laurels, he indicated that, in his own practice, he constantly attempted to determine issues and methods by which the issues could be addressed. Noting conflict can be a natural part of the planning process, John viewed the process of building agreements as an essential part of his job and carefully distinguished between the terms consensus and agreement-building. Recognizing that the former was part of the latter, John noted that in those instances when he was dealing with school principals and consensus or agreement could not be reached, he reserved the final decision on certain matters.

In matters pertaining to the Board, John actively sought to build agreements, and viewed policies developed by the Board and decisions made by simple majority at a Board meeting as binding agreements. However, he described one major decision made by the Board which caused him a significant amount of stress in its implementation since it was a decision with which he did not agree. When asked if he ever experienced professional and personal conflict in implementing Board decisions with which he did not agree, John could only identify this one decision, perhaps because of his philosophical and professional orientations towards Board decisions and actions:

> Ultimately, I'm of the view that if I don't agree with the action of the Board, then I better work as hard as I can to change it and if I can't change it, then I better start looking for another job. I better not stay around here because first of all, loyalty is a very important part of the operation. You have to be loyal. It's required I think, from a moral point of view and certainly from a legal point of view. There's enough court cases to indicate that the employer can expect loyalty from an

> employee. And so, if you can't change it, and you can't be loyal to it, then you better go someplace else! (John, p. 15)

John described this particular political decision, how he felt about it, what he did to implement the decision, and what he did to advise the Board in ultimately considering the reversal of the decision. The story, which deals with the cancellation of the French Immersion Kindergarten Program, is instructive:

> There was one circumstance, a few years back, with the French Immersion Program. We had a number of trustees who wanted to pull the plug on French Immersion at the Kindergarten level, mainly from a point of view of finance and the fact that a number of our students were [non-resident] students. They wanted to pull the plug at our last meeting in June, which is the fourth Tuesday in June, and discontinue the program. I indicated to the Board that I was really opposed to that from the point of view that we had the registration for the program. We had the budget in place. We had told everybody that it was going and to do it at that point in time was really a bad move and shouldn't be done. But, nonetheless, the Board said, the vote went 3-2. It was a split Board, and all of a sudden, we were left without a Kindergarten program for the next year. The Board then left it with me to make it happen. So, I determined that the best thing to do would be to call all of the parents together, explain to them what the decision was, explain to them the reasons that the Board had used in making it, and to ask for their help in finding a way in which I could accomplish this. I called a meeting the very next day. This was June 24th and school was ending in a few days. All the parents came out and shot me to pieces! They just leveled me off, the spokesman of the Board here! There was nothing I could do that was right! (John, pp. 14-15)

Knowing the decision made by the Board was the wrong one for the wrong reasons, John nonetheless demonstrated loyalty to the Board by attempting to implement the decision. Taking the brunt of the parents' anger, John remained "cool" throughout the parent meeting, and focused on the goal of the meeting. When asked how he felt and what he did at the meeting, John commented,

> I'm the kind of a guy that I can stay pretty cool under those situations. People can fire and pepper away at me, and call me dirty names, and I don't get excited. I just simply focus on the goal that's to be there, ask them for their assistance, apologize for the inconvenience and the bad move and the things that are happening. I tried to indicate that there were reasons why the Board had made this [decision]. They were financial. They were real reasons. I didn't point out the fact I had recommended to the contrary. I thought that's simply going to add to the fire. The end result of that meeting was the parents weren't satisfied with the fact that I couldn't change the decision and felt that they wanted to talk to the Board directly. So, I agreed that I would ask the Board to convene a meeting within a couple of days. The Board convened another meeting then within a couple of days and met with the parents and then the Board caught hell! Then, the Board reinstated Kindergarten. That's how we did it. (John, p. 16)

By focusing on the reasons for the Board decision, not indicating to the parents that he advised the Board to the contrary in this matter, and by indicating the Board reserved the ultimate authority in decision-making, John was successfully able to assist the parents in determining a course of action which would allow them to address their concerns directly to the Board. Notwithstanding the reversal of the Board decision and John's steps in obtaining that reversal, John experienced a professional and political conflict. The successful resolution of the conflict was evidenced in the reintroduction of the French Immersion Kindergarten program and by the fact that, in John's perception, he has "no problem in talking to those people today!" (John, p. 15).

In further discussions about the topic of French Immersion Kindergarten Programming and the highly political nature of the advocacy groups for that program, John recognized the pressure tactics used to seek political ends by a particular group:

> I think a big part of the conflict comes from the fact that the [advocacy group] has as one dimension of their organization, active lobbying as a technique. They train their members how to be active lobbyists and this is one of the things you get from that parent group that you don't get from others. Consequently, you get groups coming into school Board meetings actively lobbying and putting a lot of pressure on. That's a dimension that you don't see in other areas and we have an advisory group. We've invited them to sit in on it. We instruct our principals to establish good relationships with this parent body as with others and we really try to rise above it. We say, "Look, we're going to do a good job. We're going to try to set our objectives. We're going to try to work in the best interests of your children. Were going to do it within the constraints that we have. We're going to invite you to talk about it. But, in the end, we can only do what we can do. We need your support. We don't want you in the community saying that what is happening isn't good enough. What you're going to do is frighten other parents from getting into the program. If you always talk about the negatives and you paint French Immersion as a program with problems all the time, then you're really going to work to the disadvantage of the program. Let's start to talk about some of the strengths." We have some degree of cooperation, but there is the lobbying mentality. (John, p. 16)

John's comments indicated he recognized the effect of lobby groups on the decision-making process and that he placed a value on correctly and properly dealing with those groups. Secondly, by focusing on the education of children as the *prima facie* concern of the school system, by providing educational opportunities within the financial constraints faced by his school jurisdiction, and by emphasizing strengths rather than weaknesses, John indicated some degree of cooperation was achieved between the school system and the lobby group. John also indicated that experiencing pressure from these groups was not pleasant and groups which focus on negatives can have far-reaching consequences:

> Parents unfortunately don't understand the problems of dwelling only on the negative. The negative becomes the whole picture. And, the truth of the matter is the negative is only a small part of the picture. Even with the French Immersion program, we have a very strong program. (John, p. 16)

A close analysis of the French Immersion Kindergarten issue provided more clues as to John's preferred styles of operating, particularly in a confrontational situation. In the meeting held with parents to discuss the former issue, John was fully prepared to advance the position held by the Board. Parents, as he stated, "leveled him off" as the Board spokesman but he chose to "remain cool" under this pressure. In both issues, John chose to explore options, to emphasize strengths rather than weaknesses, to accept majority decisions made by the Board as binding and deserving of support even if the decisions were ones with which he disagreed, to communicate reasons to the stakeholders for those decisions while remaining silent on his own opinions to the contrary, to establish and maintain effective relationships with advocacy groups, and to emphasize, above all else, working in the best interests of children subject to recognizable constraints. Through these strategies, he was able to directly and indirectly communicate his values to others. It is important to note these values were communicated less by direct statements about his values and more by behaviours which demonstrated those values to others. Walking the talk is extremely important to John in the political context in which he works.

Noting he has not had the experience of complying with a direction with which he fundamentally disagreed, he clearly indicated that should such an occasion arise, he was prepared to work hard to change that direction within the appropriate political context. Should he be unable to effect that change, he stated he was prepared to look for another job rather than sacrifice deeply held principles.

George

In the political context in which he worked, George adopted the role of teacher to a significant degree in his interactions with the Board of Trustees. Believing trustees had to be educated on the various issues the system was facing, George sought to offer a balanced view on issues to the trustees.

His mission to be an educator, in a very broad sense, prompted him to act in this capacity with his Board of Trustees because he felt an obligation to "educate" them on issues which required a professional educator's point of view. He commented, "For that matter, when I look at my relationship with our Board, I sometimes try to say to them, 'This is what I think is a professional look at an issue'" (George p. 2). In discussing how he approached the contentious issue of private schooling in Alberta with his Board, George applied his "teacher" views to this political conundrum. Knowing the Board felt compelled to support the position held by the provincial trustees' association, George nonetheless emphasized there was another issue to be considered. In preparing the Board for the annual trustees' convention, at which time the private schools issue would be debated by the assembly, George outlined how he would attempt to inform trustees of the broader picture:

> This morning I did a series of ASBA resolutions and they have a variety of issues. What do you think of private schooling for example? The ASBA has a continuing policy statement that says private schools are a NO-NO and I point out to our trustees that they may be a NO-NO to the ASBA but they are provincial policy. The province is committed, I think, to increased aid to private schools. So I want them to understand that there's two sides to the private schools issue. The one that people are writing to the ASBA saying, "You must stop that", and the other, the province saying, "We think we should have private schools because if we don't, we'll have more and more people withdrawing and going on their own." With private schools, under some sort of provincial agency or guidelines, there's more of an opportunity for them to influence the schools. (George, pp. 2-3)

George chose to view the issue in a very broad context characterized by society's desire to exercise private choice in schooling at public expense. He summed up his approach:

> In looking at my role and talking to trustees, and coming back to the issue of private schools, I try to say to them, "There are two sides to this question: The ASBA has

> one bias, the provincial government has another. But, at least, be aware." I suppose that's bringing my values and what I think I am and my role is, I think, to make them better trustees, to make them well-educated representatives of the educational community so that when they go talking about issues, they are aware that most of them have two sides. (George, p. 3)

This summary included George's view that issues rarely have only two sides about which trustees must be aware, although he stated, "I don't know that they necessarily appreciate that" (George, p. 4). He took the same stance with trustee candidates:

> In talking to trustee candidates for the election that's coming up, and several of them have called, I've said to them, that one of my roles is to make you informed, to make it possible for you to be informed on the issues that confront us as a school system. I don't think that they need to do a great deal of homework when I can dig this information out for them probably fairly quickly. (George, p. 4)

The discussion about private schools indicated George was prepared to advocate an educational perspective which was different from the political view held by the provincial trustees' association-- a view his Board felt compelled to support.

Since George viewed issues as multi-faceted, he sought to make trustees aware of the diverse interests behind each issue by using approaches which could be described as developmental, guiding, and supportive. While he adopted a similar approach with teachers and school principals, George was somewhat uncertain of the degree to which these groups were appreciative of his efforts. However, George noted his Board was very supportive of actions in this regard and encouraged him to work in a facilitative capacity rather than forcing him to control the educational process through directive means.

George's commitment to provide trustees with information was evident in the proactive stance he adopted in meeting with candidates for the trustee elections being held within a month of the interview. For George, the proactive stance would not only allow trustee candidates to speak knowledgeably about issues confronting the system. The approach would also serve to introduce a logical and rational element to the politicking expected during the election campaign. George also felt the information sessions were offered out of a sincere attempt to deal with issues in a rational way and to create a feeling of openness in the minds of the trustee candidates. However, he also admitted, in a joking fashion, that there was also a self-serving reason behind the pre-election information meetings: It made his job easier. Knowledge was also used to facilitate the development of pride in the system and the results the system in general, and its teachers in particular, were achieving.

Beyond these reasons, George also felt information could be used to counteract the issue of personalities which came into play both at Board meetings and in dealing with the public at large. Feeling issues could be better debated when the personalities of the individuals were minimized, George emphasized his job was to achieve a better understanding of the issues involved. Believing one of his primary tasks was to maintain harmonious relationships, George took steps ranging from mildly informal to significantly intrusive in order to get people talking to each other so that, once again, the focus could be on the debate, understanding, and resolution of other issues. Notwithstanding George's altruistic motivations, there was also an admission that if he did not take steps to resolve personality issues and disharmony, sooner or later trustees would begin to fight on and with the superintendent, potentially leading to the early departure of the superintendent. However, George sought to remain unaligned in these disputes and not to leave, as he stated, "footprints in the snow" (George, p. 10). Believing also that individual disputes were situationally and contextually based, George sought to be aware of these variables and to take these into consideration as he moved to reestablish harmonious relationships among the parties involved.

Survival as superintendent was a critical value for George given that he was dismissed from the superintendency in a school jurisdiction in a different province. As a consequence of that experience, George developed a "law" for himself, which essentially required him never to be fired again. However, he indicated his beliefs in the primacy of teaching and facilitating the teaching process as superintendent were no different now than they were in his previous superintendencies. In a very pragmatic sense, George believed anticipating problems before they became problems was advantageous not only in dealing early on with issues, but also in ensuring he continued as superintendent. Practicing this belief not only gave the appearance of knowing what is happening and predicting what could happen, but also generated in the minds of the trustees that their superintendent was on "top of things", heading off problems before they became problems.

While George did not view himself as a controlling person, he recognized circumstances in the provincial funding of education were conspiring to produce an increased amount of control on education. Aware of the high cost of maintaining a lower pupil-teacher ratio, George noted discretionary spending was largely tied to the district pupil-teacher ratio and, if changes were necessary to save substantial amounts of money, changes would have to occur in this area. Thus, control took on the dimension of reducing expectations and communicating an awareness of the constrained ability of the district and the taxpayers to meet expectations. George's emphasis on providing information, involving others, and teaching others about issues were highly evident in the strategy he and his administrative team had developed to convey the message to the teaching staff. Undoubtedly, a similar strategy would be used when and if the need for public meetings on this issue became apparent.

Due to changing times and circumstances, particularly in the financial area, George believed strongly in seeking out creative ways to maximally achieve priorities within the constraints of available funds. George also felt he should be held accountable for achieving priorities established by the Board and that this accountability should be reflected in his annual evaluation. However, George was also cautious in the new political environment created by the election of a new Board. This caution was reflected in determining with the new Board, as soon as possible after the election, if the identified priorities were indeed representative of the wishes of the new Board.

George believed the trust the Board had shown in his ability to identify appropriate ends and means was very important. However, this degree of trust had to be earned and George philosophically and demonstrably followed a doctrine of a "no secrets organization" (George, p. 41) in earning this trust. In a philosophical sense, the value placed on trust could be attributed more to consequentialism and pragmatism than to deeply held principles. This conclusion is based on George's comments that trust and no secrets cause people to commit to the school system, their jobs, and to each other as they strive to provide the best possible educational services to students.

Feedback George obtained from trustees as they completed his annual evaluations led him to believe trustees were satisfied with the openness and trust he was demonstrating. Noting trustees found it dull to be a trustee in his jurisdiction because all necessary information was provided to the Board, George felt he had considerable discretion in choosing appropriate ends and means. Trustees who insisted that he be highly visible in the school jurisdiction upon his commencement of employment found he could now spend his time more valuably in other critical areas. To achieve these more important tasks, George spent time in developing and implementing organizational structures, working with people, instilling a sense of pride in employees and the community in the school system, and a developing and articulating a focus for the school system which emphasized learning and teaching.

In relation to political concerns, George believed problems, even small ones, must be dealt with promptly lest the small problems become large ones. Having described a problem which occurred because he disagreed with the Board's decision, George felt loyalty, commitment, trust, and caring obligated him to support the Board's decision. Disagreements with the Board decision were confined to private discussions with the Board while George demonstrated unqualified support for the Board in public. Although George described the problem as one of conscience, he felt, on reflection, his conscience was wrong. Adopting a "We" stance as opposed to a "They" stance, George felt the decision must be supported in tangible ways and, while sabotaging the effectiveness of the decision was possible for him as superintendent, sabotage was improbable since he felt a commitment to support the Board. In addition, because George believed the Board represented the community, the wishes of the community, in some decisions, must be respected.

George also believed that while the Board shaped priorities for the school system, it was his obligation to develop priorities for himself with respect to accomplishing ends by the most appropriate means. Knowing the Board trusted him in his actions and in dealing with issues, George was not about to disabuse this trust. Feedback from the Board was also very important to George in shaping priorities and in confirming mutual commitment. Finally, George believed that if the public was happy, the Board was happy as well. Accordingly, George worked to keep the Board happy by achieving what the Board, after securing public input, believed to be important.

Thomas

Thomas indicated that while he had worked extremely hard to establish a good relationship with the public system after the inception of his school district, he found the relationship had deteriorated in recent times and had reached the point where conflict was occurring. That the conflict could be attributed to the collision of the variety of interests among the multiple parties involved is a truism. Morgan (1986) presented an analysis of the nature of conflict which helps to understand the fundamental issues involved in Thomas' story:

> Conflict may be personal, interpersonal, or between rival groups or coalitions. It may be built into organizational structures, roles, attitudes, and stereotypes, or arise over a scarcity of resources. It may be explicit or overt. Whatever the reason, and whatever the form it takes, its source rests in some perceived or real divergence of interests. (p. 155)

Thomas' actions in attempting to resolve the conflict are illustrative of a value base oriented to the provision of a Catholic education as a matter of right and as a matter of being the right thing to do. However, Thomas demonstrated a belief that the circumstances of all parties had to be considered in his actions. In reflecting upon his covert involvement with the parent groups, characterized by providing moral support and information and remaining ostensibly neutral in the issue, Thomas admitted his involvement was greater than he had planned it to be. While Thomas had hoped to resolve the issue by remaining neutral and avoiding direct confrontation with the public school district and Department of Education officials, he believed the potential disruption to his system through avoidance was far greater than that accruing from becoming more actively involved. Thomas found avoidance to be unacceptable.

Thomas was fully aware of the competing interests which underpinned this conflict. Prime among these were financial interests which had to be counterbalanced against the fundamental rights of access of Catholic parents to a Catholic education for their children. By working quietly behind the scenes with the Catholic parent groups and his Board, Thomas felt he could simultaneously facilitate the wishes of the parents and respect the concerns of the public system. Believing his tactics were the right ones, Thomas indicated he wanted greater collaboration and accommodation rather than competition and compromise.

Thomas thought the actions taken by officials in the public school system were far more representative of competition, and the misinformation provided to the Catholic parents by the public school system regarding the financial costs of maintaining the tuition agreement forced Thomas to take a more active involvement in the issue. By providing "correct" information to the parents, Thomas strengthened the parents' case and demonstrated a greater commitment to his "bottom line" values of educating Catholic students. While Thomas wanted to preserve a working relationship with the public school district, the relationships between what parents were desiring and his fundamental beliefs became more important.

On the other hand, the concerns of others were both complementary and diametrically opposed to those Thomas held. In relation to the former, parents wanted guaranteed access for their children to a Catholic education, which Thomas fully supported. Secondly, the parents, while respecting the financial concerns of the public district, were requesting that the public system continue to finance the attendance of their children in

Thomas' school district. Thirdly, the parents were prepared to form their own separate school districts and seek amalgamation with Thomas' school district as the most direct means to achieve their first and foremost end. In this regard however, the parents were less concerned with appearing to be self-serving than Thomas.

In regard to those concerns diametrically opposed to Thomas', perhaps none was so obvious as resorting to unacceptable means to achieve unacceptable ends. The actions of the public school district in providing misinformation to parents was one such example. In addition, as Thomas noted, senior officials in the Department of Education were not as concerned with ethics, doing the right thing, as was Thomas. The education of children seemed to be the least of the concerns of parties involved in the dispute.

Thomas' responses to resolving these multiple concerns were indicative of his strong desire for integrity, honesty, respect for the situations in which others found themselves, his desire for harmony but not at all costs, and in maintaining and advocating for the rights of children in general and Catholic children in particular, to a quality education.

Peter

In making decisions, Peter placed significant importance on acquiring facts, relevant information, input from others, and following the basic tenets of the Catholic faith in general and the Gospel in particular. He viewed the religious base of his decision-making as an assumption and implied that it was evident in all of the decisions he made. He felt strongly that it would be wrong to expect others in the school system to follow the three C's of Catholic education (i.e., Caring, Compassion, and Christianity) when he did not demonstrate them himself. Rightness of decisions was assessed through a series of signposts: Did they affect the dignity and worth of an individual; did they harm students; did they reflect biases instead of respect for the common good; and were they unfair? Fairness was assessed through the consideration of individual circumstances rather than assuming all had to be treated the same.

A number of Peter's fundamental beliefs were founded in religion, not an unreasonable expectation given he was a superintendent in a Catholic school district. As he stated, "In Catholic education we see things differently [because] we have a different *raison d'être*" (Peter, p. 3). This difference placed significantly different expectations on him and the other staff members in the school system. Peter's deeply held religious convictions caused some frustrations since, in Peter's estimation, some of the staff members did not accept their faith's commitment and did not act appropriately either as Catholics in particular or as Christians in general.

His greatest concern in this area was that a number of staff members did not actively demonstrate their faith in the education of students. This was particularly so in seeking the agreement of staff members to accept and to achieve the mission of the school district. However, Peter also felt performance deserved to be recognized and that one of his major responsibilities was helping others. Changing societal norms and values and diminished fiscal resources were affecting, in a negative sense, the level of success Peter felt he could have in serving others.

Despite his beliefs in openness, empathy, trust, and sharing, Peter was unable to go the significant distance in allowing one group formal representation on the Board: He remained intractable in his view that he could not advocate for formal Native representation on the Board. While he fully respected and believed in cultural tolerance and the integration of Natives within the school system, he believed the prevailing community norms precluded formal voting representation on the Board for the Native stakeholders in his school system. In an attempt to mollify the concerns of the Native group, input was sought from Native representatives at the Board level in much the same way it was sought on policy issues involving multiple segments of the educational community. While he hoped for understanding from such a process, Peter nonetheless sought to maintain the status quo in regard to power and authority. His view in this instance may be partially attributed to his belief in leadership: Leadership can be exercised only if others are prepared to allow it to be exercised.

Peter steadfastly maintained his belief in the dignity and worth of all. However, the varying expectations of society for the education system, and the sacrosanct nature of these expectations placed unprecedented demands upon the system to deliver. As a consequence of the constraints of plurality, individualism over the collective good, a reluctance to change, to adapt and to make the best use of resources, and the conservative and liberal traditions within the Catholic community, Peter was increasingly called upon to argue that education can and does make a difference and that the arguments of constraints must be viewed as a challenge to seek more desirable options.

Consensus was very important for Peter. He preferred to work out differences of opinion at the Board table and sought to ensure that the opinions of others were listened to and respected. He recognized single-issue trustees are blinded by their own agenda but that they are often moved to view a broader picture because of the magnitude of the issues facing the Board. Thus, individual concerns soon paled in relation to those affecting the Board as a whole.

The Interpretive Context

These superintendents assisted others, through both formal and informal processes, in making decisions by involving them directly in planning, gathering information, and recommending courses of action to be taken. Using such a strategy was as important as the recommendation itself since the strategy involved values such as collaboration, consultation, respect for the values and positions of others, trust, individual freedom, and the common good.

Process represented the manner in which people were brought together to handle problems and to determine courses of action. For the superintendents, process represented the way in which changes were discussed and implemented such that commitment rather than compliance characterized the implementation of changes. That is not to say, however, these superintendents removed themselves from the decision process to the point where neither their own nor the organization's values were not taken into consideration in that process. In all but one interview, superintendents commented they reserved unto themselves final decision-making authority although this was exercised only when decisions made by others were not made in the best interests of students, were outside of policy, were contrary to the mission and priorities of the school system, or did not reflect the basic tenets of human dignity. Of course, the Board could supersede the superintendent's authority in any and all matters and could and did, for example, in John's story, make a decision not in the best interests of children (e.g., the arbitrary cancellation of the French Immersion Kindergarten program), but in terms of their own political interests.

Thus, an effective balance had to be achieved between process--involving others and reconciling diverse interests--with the need to make decisions. In other words, form could not dictate function or substance. By focusing on the "business" of the organization, these superintendents showed how both form and substance worked together to the benefit of the students, those who serve the students, and the parents of the students.

The literature showed the necessity of achieving consensus and common direction for school systems such that a belief structure could govern the actions of all participants rather than having actions governed by authoritarian or autocratic means. A crucial element in establishing and maintaining this belief process is the concept of trust. Trust was predicated upon openness, a belief by followers and others in the integrity of the leader because of actions consistent with stated beliefs and facts, respect for the opinions of others, and a belief by the leader in the ability of others to act autonomously and correctly. Ethical standards forged the link between what the superintendents wanted for their school system and their own personal beliefs and actions. As discussed in the previous theme, integrity provided coherence and consistency among organizational aims, and personal values, beliefs, and behaviour.

Agreements had to be made not only with external groups; they also must be made between the superintendent and the body to which the superintendent reports. The integrity of superintendents could not be compromised through actions they were directed to take by the Board and with which they might fundamentally disagree. While organizational values were formed through and reflected in the actions of the superintendent, they also were formed by the actions of the Board. Political leadership exercised by the Board, in some instances, was top-down as opposed to the desired bottom-up political leadership typically exercised by the superintendent. In effect, the Board's leadership could be considered as directive, and substance won out over process. Notwithstanding the superintendent's fundamental values, two choices had to be made: Comply with the Board's decision or make a decision to work elsewhere.

The concept of integrity permeates the agreement building process--seeking commitments from others as to courses of action--in the educational system. While the agreement process is important, the leadership behaviour of the superintendents in that process becomes far more important, since this behaviour is predicated upon integrity.

Summary

In seeking agreements on issues, superintendents paid due and careful consideration to both process and substance. Process was extremely important since it was through formal and informal mechanisms that others were encouraged and solicited to offer their input into the final decision-making which would resolve an issue. However, during the process phase of building agreements, it is critical to note that none of the superintendents ever lost sight of the necessary objective--the substance--inherent in issue resolution.

Elements of character emerged from the superintendents' discussions in this vital area. First and foremost, the concept of integrity--again, the wholeness of acting in accordance with one's beliefs--emerged as critically important to these individuals. Inherent in this notion of integrity were the values of honesty, openness, trust in others to perform to the best of their ability in accordance with commonly held goals and beliefs, respect for the opinions of others, ethical standards--particularly in light of the impact of decisions and process on others--representing what the superintendents wanted for their organizations consistent with their own beliefs, and a fundamental belief in the purpose of and for the organization.

Second, in dealings with the Board, superintendents remarked frequently on exercising informal influence with individual trustees on critical issues and used their relationship with trustees to seek agreement on specific courses of action. In this context, the degree of trust placed by individual trustees and the Board in the superintendent was seen to be the most critical variable in achieving consensus on issues. This trust was obtained through practicing the values inherent in the superintendent's integrity. This is not to say, however, that the superintendent always achieved agreement with the Board. This was made especially clear in the stories of George, John, Henry, James, and Luke. These superintendents took a stand and advocated their own beliefs with varying degrees of success. However, rather than viewing the absence of a formal agreement as a loss of prestige, power, or position, the superintendents took the directions given them by the Board and reconciled the direction with their own consciences and the agreement implicit in their employment with the Board. As John commented, the Board has a right to expect the superintendent will demonstrate loyalty in carrying out a Board decisions even if the superintendent may disagree with the decision. The superintendent, on the other hand, agrees to demonstrate this loyalty.

Third, while consensus was important to every superintendent participating in this study, no superintendent was prepared to tolerate lack of consensus as an excuse for not making a decision. Further, if the consensus reached was believed to be in marked opposition to the best interests of students, invariably defined in the mind of the superintendent, the superintendent was prepared to make a unilateral decision such that the primary aims of the district would still be achieved and the client protected. One other value base was reflected in making decisions when consensus could not be reached. Superintendents viewed themselves as the person upon whose desk the "buck stopped". In this sense, they felt they were fully accountable for decisions made in all aspects of the school system and were not prepared to see either students or the financial viability of the district jeopardized in any way. Self-interest was often viewed as the demon to be confronted in these instances.

Theme Four: Power, Authority, Relationships, and Decision-making.

Introduction

Traditionally, power has been viewed in a very negative context, since power usually involves directing others to undertake certain actions, achieve specific results, or demonstrate some allegiance to a particular philosophy. Use of power implies the direct use of sanction or reward to motivate individuals toward superior performance or to accomplish other ends deemed appropriate for the organization. In short, power, in these examples, is used to direct people. The following excerpts from the superintendents' stories show that directive leadership can be and is far more than simply using legitimate power and authority to accomplish particular ends. Influence may also be viewed as directive authority, since actions taken by others are reflective of the influence exerted by superintendents. In addition, power and authority were invariably tempered by some fundamental values which determined what and how power and authority would be used.

Luke

In a story Luke related about a teacher with multiple sclerosis, he experienced a significant moral dilemma which could be characterized as doing what is best for students while simultaneously doing what is right for the individual: "I think you run into some situations where you feel bad when people aren't successful. You know, you have to let somebody go. I think those are the tough ones" (Luke, p. 22). Because the system demanded accountability from each of its employees, and Luke was responsible for ensuring accountability was demonstrated, tough decisions were made. However, the demand for accountability was met with a degree of empathy for the position of others: "It's important for teachers [to look after themselves too], but I don't think the focus should be what's best for teachers; it has to be what's best for kids. You hold teachers being able to do their jobs by being considerate of them as well. But, the focus for education has to be on the students when they're here on the job" (Luke, pp. 9-10). On the other hand, Luke commented that he "had to be a caregiver to [teachers] and to be helpful to them and what have you. It's tough" (Luke, p. 23)!

With these fundamental views in mind, the actions Luke took to resolve the case of the teacher with MS were instructive. Through creative integration, Luke was able to provide an acceptable and desirable option for the individual teacher while preserving and protecting the interests of the clients of the school system.

> I had a young teacher who has MS now, and her condition . . . deteriorated. . . . She was off for a while, and she was missing a lot of school, so parents were after me. This was grade one. So they were not happy, and you get into that issue of what's right, and I knew what was right for the kids: that she shouldn't be there. (Luke, p. 23)

While Luke recognized that it was not right for this teacher to be teaching grade one because of her condition, he also felt an obligation to find a solution right for the teacher. He was successful:

> We managed to find a situation for her for last year. We accommodated her; we allowed her to go on [rehabilitative employment] where you work half time and you still collect LTD for half time. We put her in a situation where she didn't have a home room . . . and even that wasn't working out. . . . I thought I was going to have to deal with that before the end of the year, and then she and her husband looked at getting into another . . . business. . . . She's now taken a leave of absence with us, and I'm hoping that situation is going to be permanent for them. (Luke, p. 23)

Luke felt the issue was a moral dilemma in which he was forced to make choices potentially having a negative effect upon either the individual teacher or the children she was responsible for teaching. In the final resolution, all parties to the issue were able to have their needs met. Luke felt the outcome was consistent with his stated value of providing the best possible service to children, although there was another consideration. As Luke said, "You have to do [what is best for students]. But I still think you try to do it without--I think you still try to be considerate of the individual as much as you can be" (Luke, p. 24).

Despite a perception of non-interference and non-pressure by the Board in resolving the issue, Luke knew the actions he would take would be scrutinized by the Board. Ultimately, the involvement of the Board in granting a leave of absence to the teacher served both to inform the Board of alternatives which had been examined and to involve them in making a decision which had significant implications for the school system. Luke identified a strong reliance on the basic values to which he ascribed and represented in a Catholic context: "There is a strong spiritual base to those [decisions], but I guess, in terms of how I want to be treated and how I want to treat other people, and they go back to the whole business of integrity and honesty and fairness and compassion" (Luke, p. 25).

Luke believed his past experiences in progressively responsible administrative positions and his lengthy experience as superintendent provided him with the ability to effectively and judiciously use the power and authority accruing to his position: "You learn to handle [power] more effectively" (Luke, p. 25). He defined the negative use of power as "a situation where, '[If] you won't do it my way, okay; this is the way it's going to be and, if you don't like it, then find another place to work'" (Luke, p. 25)!

While he recognized trusting others to do the right things, involving others in decision-making, and operating from a common focus were consistent with his stated values of fairness, integrity, honesty, and a desire to treat others as he would like to be treated, as superintendent he was ultimately responsible for the operation of the school system. This view carried with it a concomitant responsibility to take a stand when circumstances required the use of power and authority: "Sometimes, you have to say to people, '[This is the way it has to be]', I think, because there's certainly values and principles you're not going to give up" (Luke, p. 25).

Invariably, this bottom line for the use of power could be best illustrated when "it comes down to a situation of what's better for teachers or what's better for kids, there's no compromise there [because] I will take what's better for kids every time" (Luke, p. 25). Notwithstanding his desire to always administer the system in accordance with those values, he was prepared to veto initiatives if he felt they were contrary to the collective good and representative of self-interest. This was particularly evident in the actions Luke undertook in dealing with the high school's request for additional staffing.

In a time of fiscal restraint, Luke recognized reductions in overall levels of staffing in the school system would have to occur. However, he also recognized these reductions had to be taken in such a way as to minimize negative effects to individuals. By involving others in the decision-making process and by talking directly to those affected, Luke felt he was able to balance caring and compassion with the pragmatic realities faced by the school jurisdiction. Luke also believed shared decisions are the best decisions and he demonstrated his philosophy in the staff reduction issue, in the negotiations with the support staff union, in the development of the mission statement for the school system, and in discussions with and actions taken when the performance of a member of the administrative team was not satisfactory. The last issue is instructive.

Over a period of time, Luke attempted to point the individual in the right direction. In a pragmatic sense, Luke

> [was]willing to overlook [some things] in consideration of what he did financially for the school district, because we were able to put money away in our resources, and we were always in good financial position in this school district, so I very much appreciated his knowledge and skills and abilities in those areas, because those were not my strengths. (Luke, p. 36)

However, pragmatism soon paled as a rationale for retaining this person on staff and Luke was compelled to use power and authority to achieve a resolution of the issue:

> He was aware of his own shortcomings. When we talked about that, it wasn't that he denied them; he was aware of them. But it didn't create any conflict. There were occasions when I had to step in and reverse some of the decisions that he made. A lot of times it was just his perception of how things were going to be and that was it. He didn't really look at the facts or look at the probabilities. (Luke, p. 36)

The fundamental difficulty occurred however, because the administrator, in Luke's perception, did not make decisions based on the best interests of students. Luke explained:

> In his role he was dealing an awful lot with the public and parents in particular, and transportation issues. I don't think he was really looking at the child's situation or looking at parent concerns really sensitively. (Luke, p. 36)

Over the course of time, Luke began to feel the effect of the administrator's decision-making style as Luke was the primary person to whom complaints were directed. The Board, too, became aware of the difficulties being caused by the administrator and reflected these concerns when the superintendent involved the Board directly in the administrator's performance evaluation:

> [He left the district but] he was not forced to leave. I think he just found the job too demanding and just decided--well, he also wanted to take a year off and go back and study, and had asked for a leave of absence. He actually asked for a sabbatical. But the Board stuck by its guns and said no. They said this was a most inappropriate time, and then he came back and asked for a leave of absence without pay, and the Board granted it. (Luke, p. 37)

Leonard

A recurring area of emphasis throughout Leonard's story was the responsibility which had to be assumed with the authority and power vested in the superintendent. Early in his story, Leonard commented upon the degree to which he felt this responsibility and the degree to which others expected him to assume it as well:

> The bottom line happens when you're the superintendent, probably a little bit akin to a principal where you're given a lot of autonomy. Once you get into Central Office and you're an Assistant Superintendent, you're working closely with the superintendent, but the superintendent is the one who takes the heat. (Leonard, p. 4)

In a manner very similar to that expressed by George, Leonard chose to handle this bottom line responsibility by adopting a very positive philosophy and having a primary focus on good things:

> I guess my perspective is being very positive; it always has been. I look on the positive-type things. That doesn't mean that I ignore the other, but there are a lot of people in this world that are quite negative. My primary focus is good . . . and I don't like being around negative people too much. I don't like to spend very much time with them. The focus is on positive; being proactive; making things happen; how do we move things along? If we've got a problem, how can we resolve it to make the situation that much better? So that's the kind of focus. (Leonard, p. 55)

Leonard felt being positive caused others to place greater trust in the superintendent. However, the people must see the positive attitude in practice as opposed to only hearing it "mouthed" by the superintendent. In this sense, Leonard used his power to influence others such that they too adopted attitudes focusing on doing good and resolving issues.

Perhaps because he felt a great deal of responsibility in exercising his power and authority, and because his focus was on the good, Leonard was not uncomfortable with the power and authority vested in his position. More importantly, Leonard indicated he did not have to use legitimate authority or power to achieve ends:

> I don't think I've ever had to use power. When you look back at it, and I'm looking back throughout my career, it's been more through discussion with people, working out things that would be effective that would help the organization and would also help them. I think of the number of teachers that we've terminated, because that can be a very traumatic type of thing, and in my experience, I have always had a situation where the person has felt fairly good about what's happened. Basically, people don't want to work where they're uncomfortable and unhappy.
>
> If you look at it from their perspective, when it comes down to the final business of having to terminate someone, they're most unhappy with what's happened and their situation. Whether it is they can't handle the kids in the classroom or the problems that they've got with other staff members or with the administration, they're looking at trying to have an honorable way out as well. So moving in that direction hasn't been a power base, although I could certainly just move that they be terminated, and then do it. (Leonard, pp. 26-27)

Rather than using power to achieve a specific end, Leonard was very conscious of the means by which the end was obtained. In this sense, he was careful to actively consider the position of the other individual while simultaneously keeping the substance of the issue first and foremost in the discussions. Just as importantly, in making decisions which could have a negative effect upon others, or when rectifying a mistake made by others, Leonard was conscious of maintaining the dignity of the other individual:

> I think, whether that's a decision that a principal's made that's wrong, you still maintain their dignity. You talk about those things and the support that you have for them and that many aspects of the decision were correct: "This one led you into a problem." People can understand that, and you can get their cooperation and their support in terms of those areas. (Leonard, pp. 28-28)

Leonard also viewed commonly held goals as the source of direction for the system and the actions others took rather than by directing the actions of others. Since the goals and directions reflected, to a large extent, the values of both those who made up the system and the system itself, control was established through commitment rather than compliance:

> [Balancing the demands for the involvement of others in decision making while being expected by the Board to retain some control over the school system is achieved by] clearly establishing what you want to do through the planning process and cooperatively doing that, and having the leadership to fulfill that. Maybe, it is being able to present the reasons why we do certain things or why it's necessary to do things. I think if people can see the bottom line being on these decisions that that's what's best for kids as your thrust, then that's what you do. And even not being able to put a counselor in or not being able to put an assistant principal, one may argue, "Well, that would be a lot better for kids," but in terms of fiscal realities, maybe having four classes of grade one is better for kids than putting money into a vice-principalship, and you have to talk to people about that; you have to say, "This is a concern that I've got. How do you feel about it?" Generally, I've always found that they've said, "Yes. While we would really like to have this, and we know that other school jurisdictions have these things and so on, you're right; in terms of our situation it's the best." (Leonard, p. 28)

Constraints placed on the system by inadequate resources were overcome by commonly held beliefs, complemented by facts, logic, and shared discussions: "I see working with staff, I see working with administrators planning for moving our system ahead, working with trustees and that, great in that regard" (Leonard, p. 30).

Fiscal circumstances in his district prompted Leonard and the Board to examine expenditures in light of established priorities, values, and goals. In this sense, caretaking staff in the district were identified as a potential cost-saving, particularly if contract rather than salaried caretakers were used. Leonard knew this decision would have a pronounced negative effect upon the lives of those individuals:

> Yes, [we're forced into making difficult choices]. Like contract caretaking for instance. The process, and I'm sure we'll get into it, is going to be least satisfying, where you've got people that have worked for 20 years in this system as caretakers and taken a great deal of pride in what they've done and felt--because we've made them feel--a very important part of our operation, and the support staff are every bit as important in terms of this whole operation, and yet we're likely going to be selecting an area like that and saying, "We're going to now cut you from our operation." (Leonard, pp. 30-31)

Notwithstanding Leonard's concern for these individuals as individuals, he was prepared to make decisions to ensure the financial viability of the district and its ability to offer services to students: "It comes down to a matter of priorities, saying that our feelings for kids are more important than our feelings for some other part of our organization. While we're very concerned generally with all of our people, when it comes right down to the crunch, we're going to make sure the classroom situation for kids is still kept as our priority" (Leonard, pp. 31-32). This view was the source of power and authority for decision-making in the system.

Not only did Leonard see the advantage of using common goals as the basis for decisions, he also spoke of the desirability of maintaining relationships with others both inside and outside the school system. His previous comments indicated his belief in maintaining the dignity of others when disciplining, correcting, or ensuring the focus of the system is maintained. Other comments, particularly in regard to relationships with trustees, also showed the importance of those relationships when decisions had to be made:

> I have an excellent relationship with the trustees one-on-one, as they'll often drop in and talk to me one-on-one about different issues and so on. Or at the Board meetings, making sure that they've got clear recommendations. I always give them recommendations, absolutely, on every issue, with enough background information and then discussion of those things. If they're real heavy items, we have planning sessions or retreats to make sure that people really understand what we're talking about. The building of consensus is done through information, through looking at alternatives, through selecting alternatives that are the best and providing background so that people understand. Often people will say, "We really don't have a choice in this matter." (Leonard, p. 35)

Leonard explicitly mentioned other crucial elements in his relationships with trustees and others--trust, competence, and credibility rather than power of position:

> [Relationships are] very important, yes. I find, whether it's working with teachers or administrators or trustees, that you have to have a relationship based on trust, competence, and I think often as an administrator, and this gets back to the power question, people have to view you as competent; you're able to do your job well; you're respected because of your competence. Your power base then comes from competence, not from the position you hold. I think if you ever had to say, "Because I'm superintendent, you're going to do it", I think you're a loser. (Leonard, p. 36)

The importance of trust was emphasized in another section of the interview:

> And trust, you bet. So you have to make sure that you always are cognizant of that and that you don't do things that would compromise that. I think if you start compromising, that kind of thing, and playing games, I think you're really in trouble. (Leonard, p. 36)

The overall importance of trust was reflected in Leonard's comments about reorganizing the schools. Trust was built through the discussion process for the issue and through maintaining a focus on the substance of the issue: Providing a better quality of education for students. Leonard felt sincerity was a crucial element in the resolution of the issue:

> I think you have to be really careful in your important issues that are controversial and so on, that you get input, that you listen to people affected before those decisions are made. I think where you run into trouble is where you decide something and you go ahead and do it without getting input, without taking the time to do those things. (Leonard, pp. 37-38)

He was also very clear that in the process of securing input from those affected by crucial issues, the appearance of going through the motions or "playing games" must not be conveyed to others:

> I think you have to be sincere. I think you have to say, even in that situation where I was convinced that was the best way to go, but that didn't mean that we would necessarily go. I've been convinced certain directions are right, but if your people aren't ready to move on it, maybe you have to wait a year. (Leonard, p. 38)

Leonard effectively summarized the importance of his values inherent in relationships with others and in the way in which he used power and authority. In this excerpt, Leonard spoke of the necessity for involving others in decision-making, actively listening to the concerns of others, demonstrating fairness, credibility, objectivity, the importance of both process and substance, and how these were seen in actions he takes:

> All of the players are important and have different parts and parcels of ownership in what's taking place, so it's important to take the time to try to involve them or give them input, some input that is meaningful to them. [There is a difference between hearing and listening] and listening is what--and I think that, again, that comes back to relationships and credibility. I think it comes back to proving that that's the way you are. The personal part of being superintendent is that, yes, he's willing to listen, he's fair, he's objective, whether it's on a parent appealing something from a certain decision from the school or whatever, that you are willing to listen; that it's not that the principal is always right; that there can be a compromise where both sides can be happy in terms of the particular situation. And then going out into a process where you talk to Parent Advisory Committee members about different things. Even with the change in schools, we talked to our Parent Advisory Committee members before we had these other meetings. Listened to them and talked to them about that, and explored some of the areas where we too have a concern. It's not always [the positives]. . . and that's why you want to show the downsides to this. "Can you think of any other downsides than the ones that I have presented?" Now, that gets people a little bit mad, because, you see, some people would rather that you just presented the positive and they could come up with all of the reasons why not. It's when you present the why nots as well, that you've carefully considered those, [it appears that a balanced view has been presented] and, even though you've considered all of the why nots, this still seems to be the right direction to go when you consider all of that. If you've taken all of their thunder away, then they feel a little better. (Leonard, pp. 39-40)

One final value must be mentioned in light of Leonard's view of himself as superintendent--humility. He knew he did not and could not possibly have all of the answers to all of the questions and issues faced by the school system. Consequently, he needed help from others in resolving issues, but that did not mean substance was neglected:

> I think you have to be really careful that you don't get too caught up in that, that I can see much more clearly now from my vantage place here in this superintendent's office, even though you may feel this way, "Hey, I'm superintendent, and I can see it much better." So I'm not saying that it's always that way. I wouldn't want to get caught up in saying that people closest to the situation can always make the best decisions, but I certainly think that they can give you good input that you can look at and that you can talk about and that you can weigh in terms of it, rather than simply leaving them out of it. (Leonard, pp. 40-41)

Henry

Early in his story, Henry commented on the importance of using influence as a source of power and noted his presence in the schools was far more important in exercising this influence than was sitting in the office taking care of the administrative aspects of the system: "If you [sat in the office going through your in-basket during the day], you should have your head examined. You can be more effective by being out in the schools, interacting with your principals, visiting classrooms, communicating with trustees . . ." (Henry, p. 7). Another source of power was quickly revealed: The mission statement established the goals to be achieved by the system and actions taken represented the belief that "we're not satisfied with an average school system, just getting by. But, we have not arrived there. It's like the sum to infinity. We're a long way from it" (Henry, p. 7). Henry's direct involvement in developing the mission statement was evident in his comment that he "certainly had to initiate it and carry it through" (Henry, p. 10).

Power of influence was also used with the trustees individually and with the Board as a whole. In one instance, Henry used his specific knowledge of a teacher's performance to dissuade trustees from proceeding with a termination of contract: "I had been in the classroom. I had evaluated the teacher. I had evaluation reports. I had conferred with the principal. And, I knew the case better than they did" (Henry, p. 20). Unfortunately, some members of the Board did not view Henry's advocacy for the teacher as a case of superior knowledge tempered by fairness. Rather, as Henry stated, "One particular trustee has said privately to the other trustees when I wasn't there that if [Henry] had the courage, [he'd] fire that teacher, but he doesn't (Henry, p. 20).

In exercising his influence with the Board, Henry took care to ensure the agenda package was extremely thorough, having each written recommendation supported by appropriate background material. The open disclosure of information was seen not only as desirable, but necessary: "I'd be dead if I didn't do that. They would eat me up" (Henry, p. 28)! Providing trustees with information was one tactic Henry used but this tactic was complemented by "contact[ing] trustees by phone [and working one-on-one with trustees. But, I fall down there, and I think that someday I might pay for that. I communicate primarily with the Chairman" (Henry, p. 28). Self-protection and survival caused Henry to be extremely cautious but he recognized avoiding one particular trustee could have far reaching repercussions, especially since that trustee was able to exercise influence over others.

Power and authority were also used to recognize the achievements of others, to demonstrate the importance of actions taken to improve educational opportunities ("I suppose I fancy myself as somewhat a doer, somebody who gets things accomplished, who makes up his mind and has resolve" [Henry, p. 8]), and to build effective relationships with others. In building these relationships with others, Henry actively involved others in decision-making but final decisions were reserved to Henry and the Board: "[Deciding on what not to do was done] on the basis of, finally, what I considered most important and what the Board considered most important" (Henry, p. 12).

This view was representative of Henry's essential conception of the role he played as superintendent. A comment made in regard to involving others in decision-making was the springboard for his views on the superintendency. Henry noted the involvement of others was highly desirable but he qualified this view: "That does not mean that what they decide should be the answer is necessarily so. I certainly hold important the involvement of others in decision-making, but I will always maintain that I am going to be the final decision-maker" (Henry, p. 24). The rationale for reserving this final authority to himself was provided immediately:

> [I am the Chief Executive Officer] and I have to answer. I'm accountable to the Board for the decisions. Now, that's easy to say sitting here and something isn't facing me right now, horning right in. When it is, there's a lot more agonizing going on inside and cross-examination and trying to second-guess everything. (Henry, p. 25)

Despite Henry's ultimate authority in making decisions, he recognized limitations to exercising this right. These limitations stemmed primarily from a realistic appraisal of his situation and capabilities: "I'm still learning the tremendous multiplier effect of consulting with others and getting their input, because we have made damnably better decisions" (Henry, p. 24). He also recognized that "decisions that are made by myself within the confines of these walls are very prone to being wrong. I'm getting more humble about that and aware of that all the time" (Henry, p. 34).

Communication was seen as a vital source of power in getting the appropriate messages to people in the community. In regard to principals getting out the right messages to staff, Henry was very skeptical but he recognized his ability to control the communication was extremely limited: "You can control [communication] in a limited way. I seize as many opportunities as I can to present my views so, to that extent, I can control it" (Henry, p. 14).

Henry, like other superintendents participating in this study, had to make difficult decisions in regard to terminating employment contracts of others in the system. In these instances, power and authority were used obtrusively. In one instance involving a senior member of the administrative team, Henry noted the individual was no longer employed because "we couldn't achieve those goals or recommendations [made by an evaluation team] with him here and the Board could see it too" (Henry, p. 15). While he felt major stress during the documentation and confrontation stages of the process, Henry believed the stress was alleviated because, as he stated, "If you know you're right, it doesn't bother you as much as the ambiguity of wondering if you're right" (Henry, p. 16).

However, in a second case involving a teacher who was inappropriately touching girls, Henry moved quickly to remove the individual from staff, so quickly in fact the Board was not aware of the case until after it had been resolved. Again, Henry's statement regarding the knowledge of being right represents an underlying value of using power and authority to accomplish specific ends.

In another incident, Henry dealt aggressively with a teacher whose performance was deemed to be unsatisfactory. Based on a judgment that the teacher's performance would not improve in the future and that continuing in the position would be harmful to students, Henry moved to transfer the teacher to another school with the ultimate goal of having the teacher resign rather than accept the transfer: "I talked him into submitting his resignation, and I clearly manipulated him . . . . I set the situation up . . . and I transferred him to another school" (Henry, p. 22). While Henry had empathy for the teacher concerned because "he's a family man and his wife is working in the community" (Henry, p. 22), he stated, "That's the best thing that could happen for our kids and for our educational system. He had no business being in a classroom any more" (Henry, p. 22).

A fourth major incident occurred early in Henry's superintendency and the case involved a bus driver, well connected in the community, and a long time member of staff. Henry moved to terminate the bus driver's contract after the driver failed to obey a lawful order of the Board but he felt very badly over the decision.

In all instances, Henry believed very strongly that his actions were based on doing what was best and right for the students and for the organizational values held by the system:

> [Doing the right thing regarding the bus driver and the teacher, was based on what's best for students]. Yes, it has to be what is in the best interests of students, because that's what we're here for: We're here for the best educational interests of kids, and that's supposed to drive and guide your decisions. (Henry, p. 23)

The latter comment was indicative of Henry's view of the importance of relationships within the educational system. One of his early stated professional values dealt with the importance of helping others: "Leaving the woodpile a little higher than you found it" (Henry, p. 5). While Henry sought to make improvements to the educational system, he recognized the improvements and the doing had to reflect a "love of people. You can't be in this business and not like people" (Henry, p. 9). While this principle was important in and of itself, it was also viewed in a pragmatic sense: "I've said this to many of my principals: 'There's no use for us to be working here if we can't get along with each other. We might as well get along because it's going to make things a lot easier for all of us" (Henry, p. 9). Henry felt others saw him as "fair and honest. I don't think I have any problems there. I make mistakes, and I can be brought up short about it, corrected" (Henry, p. 17). When he had to make difficult decisions regarding the continued employment of individuals, Henry did not shy away from making those decisions because of the effect on the individual. However, Henry did feel empathy for the individual's situation, although this empathy tended to diminish if the individual chose not to demonstrate a concomitant degree of empathy for the organization and the clients it served.

In areas in which negotiation could occur, Henry felt others had to have their say and feel that their say had been listened to. There were pragmatic benefits from adopting this principle:

> Even if you wind up doing what you have to do, more people at least appreciate having been listened to and had some input. Sometimes you can arrange a compromise that works. I guess that's probably why I've survived, because I portray, a sincerity and a willingness to listen and give people a chance to [have] input. (Henry, p. 31)

Henry also advocated for the principle of flexibility in dealing with others. Although this comment was made in relation to parents discussing options for their children, the comment is also indicative of Henry's views in general:

> You have to be flexible, and you have to understand other people's points of view. So you have to understand where they're coming from. We both want what's best for the kid, so let's sit down and communicate. (Henry, p. 31)

In discussions with others, Henry often encouraged the other party to speak first and acknowledged that as superintendent, he did not always have to be "the first guy off the mark and state my position" (Henry, p. 32). He too felt in these discussions that he wanted what was best for the individual involved and not what the individual thought was best. Pleasing people also motivated Henry in his relationships with others, although there were negative consequences attached to this view since pleasing one group could potentially alienate another: "If you settle it with one guy, and then the other guy over here gets unhappy, you haven't solved a damned thing" (Henry, p. 33).

James

Very early in his story, James emphasized the importance of vision as a source of power to direct educational change. This provided the overriding sense of purpose so necessary in the school system:

> The whole idea of having a vision and a mission which focus on the student is not something that I simply articulate. I am personally obsessed or possessed with the notion that it's the leadership responsibility to create a vision of that, not within himself but within the Board and with staff and the community. (James, p. 4)

Power was thus used not only in articulating a sense of purpose, but also in encouraging others to accept the sense of purpose and vision as their own and to act on them. The power and authority of the superintendent were to be used in supporting others in attempts to achieve the vision and by developing an organizational plan and appropriate strategies to achieve the plan. This involved careful assessment of the present state of affairs and the development of solutions to address deficiencies.

For James, this strong sense of purpose tended to overshadow the concerns of others and he had been criticized for single-mindedness. Indeed, the sense of purpose was reflected in the degree to which management systems had been developed to minimize the effort required for day-to-day operations and to allow maximum effort to be devoted to achieving the really important goals and objectives. Sharing the vision was equated to empowering others: "We share the vision; education for today has to be as much on the lips of our secretaries and our people in this office as it is on ours. They have to feel that they're a part of our vision and mission as well" (James, p. 7).

The theme of single-mindedness or strong sense of purpose was again reflected in a later section in James' story. In his discussion on changing the age of school entry for students, James commented, "It's all tied to our end point where we're talking about our vision. It all has to contribute to that, and it wasn't done in isolation" (James, p. 12). In addition, James commented, "We wanted to change [some fundamental things that were getting in the road of where we wanted to be]. We stood out on that and we took a pretty strong position" (James, p. 12).

James' strong sense of purpose was criticized by trustee candidates in the forthcoming election. The strong sense of purpose caused others to see him as all powerful, particularly in his dealings with the Board:

> [Some people believe that] I run the Board, so I'm viewed as--and it comes to me directly; it comes in the literature, in the papers or something, or in a meeting--that they view me as very powerful. They use those words--a powerful superintendent --and I direct the Board. So I sat back, and the Board doesn't view it that way. But on the other hand, when you look behind it, I have been behind a lot of the decisions. (James, p. 15)

At the Board level, James provided as much information as appropriate to assist the Board in making decisions. Striving to achieve an attitude of openness and trust, James initiated a wide circulation of a publication to give trustees and others a better understanding of issues facing the system and actions to be taken. In addition, James worked with individual trustees through meetings and telephone conversations to "let them know about certain things" (James, p. 28). He had multiple reasons for doing so:

> We try [to] give [trustees and others] whatever [information] we can. What's important to us, and it doesn't matter who it is--the Board, administrators, and so on--I try and build trust. In other words, "We're not doing things for our gains or interests; we're truly trying to support you." Also part of my job is to make the Board look good by their decisions. That's the reason that I have to more and more develop their confidence. We have had an extremely good relationship, a trusting relationship and a supportive relationship. (James, pp. 28-29)

On the other hand, the best of intentions can be misinterpreted and one trustee saw James' actions as "leading the Board" (James, p. 28) and indicative of the administration's intent "to make all of the decisions for the Board" (James, p. 28). In James' words, the trustee, in a public meeting, commented, "Our administrators are highly intelligent and well-educated, but they're leading the Board. Our call is we're leading the Board [which we are expected to do] but we're [seen as] making all of the decisions" (James, p. 29).

James made no apologies for his actions since he saw himself as fully accountable for results in the district:

> In the end, because I'm accountable and someone has to make a decision, and in turn the Board would make the decision, but we would be fairly persistent in meeting with the Board in saying, "These are the positives, these are the negatives. We think the positives outweigh the negatives; it's your decision." (James, p. 28)

James felt the use of power of influence and vision were extremely appropriate in the environment in which he worked: "What we're doing is right. We have a direction [and] I don't want to jump out of it" (James, p. 21). Because of his commitment, James felt using power to accomplish specific aims was not only desirable, but also very necessary, although he expressed discomfort over the use of power, particularly in making personnel changes:

> If we are going to be successful in reaching our goals, a lot of change had to be made in that end of it, including hiring from the outside in cases and receiving that pressure, forcing or really using your power, if you like, to make some personnel changes, or in fact require through evaluations, which we do for our administrators, to really call for some significant change and improvement in them. That is uncomfortable. I'd like to be able to pat him on the back and say, "You're doing a good job", but it all ties together. Your system is only as strong as your weakest point. (James, p. 21)

Situationally, James attempted to exercise power and influence in a school system traditionally left alone by its senior administrators. Maintaining the status quo was not only seen to be desirable, but also effective. Seeking to improve educational opportunities for children through instituting some essential changes, James soon became the lightning rod for discontent in the system and was blamed for inappropriate use of power:

> [School principals] would fully admit, "We used to be able to do our own thing, to a large extent, and we weren't bothered." And that has been part, I suppose, part of the novelty of the local public as well. All of a sudden they had someone here to "crap" on if they had to and want to and they can do it, so that seems to be much easier. (James, p. 23)

In his dealings with others, James felt it was important to encourage staff since they had difficult jobs to do: "I want to be there to support, to encourage, also to challenge and to frustrate from time to time if [there is a] feeling that someone, over a period of time, is not contributing [or] is contrary to our vision or mission" (James, p. 25). He sought to create a trusting environment in which others could work such that decisions could be made by others and so mistakes, when they occurred, could be addressed without threat or fear of reprisals. In addition, James sought to have others "feel that their position is heard and feel that even in a decision that didn't go a particular way, fairly comfortable to say that 'I had my opportunity' (James, p. 32). Finally, James wanted to convey to staff, parents, and others that in dealings with students, "we are responsible, we're accountable, and we need to care; when there's hurting there, we should be hurting as well" (James, pp. 38-39).

John

One of the first areas John mentioned about power and authority related directly to influence--influence exercised through a positive attitude toward education. This positive attitude was exhibited to others, despite the fact John often felt anxious when instituting something new in the school system:

> I probably work in that realm (i.e., being positive) more than I do in the realm of the dissatisfiers. I choose not to be dissatisfied. I choose not to get into that area. I certainly have anxieties. Whenever I do something new, I'm probably scared half to death to start with, so consequently, I'm scared half to death most of the time, I guess, because most of what I do is new even though you've been through it before. You go into a new setting, you're looking for the solution, you're trying to set the goal so you approach it and you're scared, kind of anxious about it. That would be a source of anxiety, but it's not a source of dissatisfaction. In terms of being dissatisfied, I've chosen not to let that become my life. (John, p. 20)

Power and authority were also obtained through implementing the policies of the Board and finding the justification for those policies in the collective wisdom of the Board and the belief that the democratic, representative process took into consideration the public will: "You've got a policy, a policy that represents the public will and, in public education, we are essentially representing the public will and we do it through the electoral process where we get trustees who develop policies" (John, p. 3). However, as superintendent, John believed he had to demonstrate fundamental values in implementing policies and making decisions:

> I think it's a feeling you have and probably beliefs you have. Where you develop these beliefs in terms of honesty, integrity, treating the other person, you know, the Golden Rule: treating them the way you would want to be treated and so forth. Openness. I don't just have a listing myself. (John, p. 6)

Power and authority were also used in the building of agreements, and John saw his job as "one of building agreements. Consensus is part of it but you have to have the agreement and the agreement levels vary according to the group that you're looking at" (John, p 10). In areas where consensus and agreement building were somewhat strained, particularly in dealing with school principals, John indicated he would use his position to influence, but not force, others to adopt a point of view:

> Sometimes, when we have people who just don't come around in the time that we have available, then I talk to them privately (Laughter) later and we sort out the differences. And, if it's so bad that they can't live with it, I say, "Okay, we'll bring it back to the table and we'll have another go around on it". (John, p. 11)

In areas of conflict, John used his position to "force people to talk to me rather than talking to each other initially and maybe I'm a facilitator" (John, p. 11). However, he did not force a solution to the problem since "most often, the solution to that problem comes between them. Most often, I don't have the solution to the problem" (John, p. 11). His preferred style in dealing with conflict issues was to have those involved "examine the problem, look at what ought to have happened, not dwell in the past, set goals for the future, and you admonish them for it" (John, p. 11). The result: "They walk out and thank you for helping them. 'Thanks for giving me hell'" (John, p. 11)!

John's preferred style of operating perhaps stemmed from his views on the lack of efficacy of top-down, autocratic decision making and his feeling that he had always been called upon, as superintendent, to involve others in making decisions rather than imposing a solution. In addition, John commented he did not feel uncomfortable with his use of power or authority because "I think part of that comes from my concept of power. I remember a model of administration talking about the fact that your authority comes from the people over whom you hold authority. I believe that's true" (John, p. 17). Viewing power and authority as something given rather than taken and used, John outlined fundamental values in regard to each:

> [Power is] given to you by [others], and the extreme example of somebody facing a firing squad rather than yielding to the authority is the example that really convinces me that it's true. Authority is a basis of power. There is authority given with the position; there is an expectation that goes with it, but you don't have it if others don't give it to you. So that's a basis of power, and both of them, of course, in terms of influencing behavior--the authority may or may not influence behavior; that'll depend on the decision of the other person that you're trying to influence.
>
> So with that kind of concept, then I don't have any problem in using any power that I have, because I know that in the end the decision's going to be made by the other person as to whether or not they yield it. Other than that, people normally, in the end, follow what I ask them to do. I don't believe in telling people what to do; because of my concept, I ask them. (John, p. 17)

Building agreements was seen as the source of power and authority, since both resided in cooperatively developed courses of action:

> They've agreed with me; we've built an agreement. They agree with me that it ought to be done. If they don't agree with me, I expect them to tell me. If I don't agree with them, I expect to tell them. In the end they may very well yield to the power or the authority that goes with this position rather than with the logic or whatever I present, but I don't believe that an order has any more strength than a request, and a request from me or a request from any person in an administrative position, if it's a reasonable request, properly given, the onus is on the other individual to follow it, to comply; the onus is there. So you may as well give it in as kind or a positive way as you possibly can, and the use of power, then, I don't have a problem with. None whatsoever! (John, p. 18)

John also offered advice to those aspiring to be senior administrative officers in school systems:

> I've often seen people step into administrative positions [and] start out in their very first few months in a consultative mode and somehow lose sight of the fact that that's the method that works the best, [and then] step into an autocratic mode, and have things blow up in their face and not realize that, what's the saying about power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? I've seen that mistake made enough times with beginning administrators, and I don't know why I thought when I started out that I wouldn't do that, but I decided that I won't do that. (John, p. 19)

The situation in today's educational environment was viewed as being far different than in the past since more people today believe they have something to offer in developing courses of action and are prepared to demand their opportunity to be heard. In this context, John saw the involvement of others as an absolute necessity and was prepared to expand the time needed for issue resolution rather than to impose a solution for an issue. However, the time and requirement to "work through other people, then, depending upon the actions of others, can become a source of anxiety as you wait for this to happen" (John, p. 20). When undesirable options had to be taken, John viewed necessity as a justification for actions, particularly in light of today's financial difficulties faced by school districts. Power and authority had concomitant responsibilities attached to them. In discussion about budget reductions for the school district, which had a pronounced effect upon overall staffing levels, John commented, "I don't agree that getting rid of 16.5 staff positions [was] the best decision we could make. It's the best we could make given the circumstances. It's the least of the evils, . . . and it seemed to be fair, and it seemed to be necessary" (John, p. 27).

However, and consistent with John's stated values about involving others in decisions, he recognized process was important in using power to obtain jointly developed agreements in action. But, the substance of the decision, developed jointly, through shared power and authority, was more important:

> I don't think the process does it so much as the building of the agreement, what I call the social justifications: justified within a social context. It's agreed by the people within the community, by the Board, by the school principals, by the employees, by the stakeholders, that this is the best decision we can make given the circumstances that we've got, because there are alternative ways of doing it, but if this is the choice that comes out commonly that can be supported, then it is a social justification of it. (John, p. 26)

Another element tempered John's use of power and authority--the concept of fairness--not only in regard to the budget decision in particular, but also in general areas:

> The concept of fairness is so important all throughout; that's such an important thing, and it has to be seen as being fair. The lawyers' adage that not only must justice be done, but it must be seen to be done, and that's a very important thing. So they had some involvement in it; they saw it to be fair, given the circumstances which were there; they agreed that it was necessary. They didn't agree that it's the best that could ever happen; they didn't agree that it was the most desirable. Nor do I. So, yes, fairness very much comes in there. (John, p. 27)

Two other considerations inferred in John's views of power and authority must be mentioned: the importance of the mission, goals, and objectives for the school system as the focus for actions taken; and the belief in guiding others rather than directing others to achieve common goals. The first became particularly evident when John discussed the principal and teacher evaluation strategies in his district. In regard to the former, John noted the principals "take the School Board objectives and priorities, and the[se goals and objectives] are built into [their own priorities]. They take his objectives and what he sees as important [and build them in as well]" (John, p. 28). The end result:

> The [system goals and objectives] become part and parcel of the school action plan that sets things out that are to be done, and there's an agreement between the principal and myself that this is indeed what is important for him to work under in that year. [We meet with each principal] and we will in the course of that meeting look at this, look at the school action plan that he has, and we'll affirm that that's the direction we're going. (John, p. 28)

The process not only facilitated ownership by the school principals but also accountability, although accountability was not viewed in the context of the "Sword of Damocles" hanging over the heads of the principals:

> We're not saying, "You didn't do this!" But we're saying, "What needs to be done, and how far have you gone?" When you look at effectiveness you look at the process and you look at the product. As he goes he's going to make adjustments along the way, and that's the process of evaluation. You take continuous readings as you go. The goal is there. Now, the process evaluation is, "Okay, am I still headed in the right direction?" And if I'm not, then I correct it a little bit. The product one is when I get there; that's the product. When I see that he's not, then we talk about the direction he's going, and we affirm the direction. (John, pp. 29-30)

John's emphasis on the process, involving the principals in the evaluation itself, seems to take precedence over the substance of the evaluation--the attainment of specific objectives consistent with the goals and priorities of not only the school system, but also of the principals themselves. However, substance was also reflected in the statement, since it is goals which are of major importance. As John noted, achieving the destination is more important than the course, which can be changed during the journey, to get there. John's emphasis on achieving the goals and priorities was consistent with another stated view in regard to his own degree of accountability to the Board for the success of the system: "Are the school principals doing what they ought to, and are the teachers doing what they ought to? And, are the kids doing what they ought to Mr. [Superintendent]? It's all mine. Yes, the buck stops here (John, pp. 30-31)!

In regard to the issue of the teacher evaluation policy, John was adamant, during the development of the policy, that some essential considerations had to be made. First, the process had to be seen as fair, and subsequent policy revisions reflected greater emphasis on the teachers' right to appeal:

> The concept of appeal is in here, and the right to appeal, the fact that in our society the accused should be able to face their accuser; the accused should have the right to have their say; there should be the opportunity for another opinion and so forth. The specifics weren't enough. (John, p. 32)

Second, and perhaps more important and germane to the discussion on the use of power and authority, was the emphasis placed on substance--results and accountability--rather than on process--improving instruction:

> Our policy said this: "The primary purpose of supervision and evaluation of personnel is to promote, achieve, and maintain and ensure a high standard of service in accordance with the requirements of the job." Most policies said the purpose is to improve [instruction]. (John, p. 33)

Finally, John's views of his power and authority at the Board level reflect the ability to use judgment to determine what is and what is not really important. A superintendent has the responsibility to advise trustees on issues facing the district. However, trustees often react without full knowledge of the situation and the ramifications of resolving single issues in response to concerns expressed by ratepayers. Sage advice was provided to John early in his career by a superintendent who possessed significant wisdom:

> I remember the guy that was superintendent before me, and it was rather interesting. In terms of conflict, I remember his advice to me when I was a beginning deputy superintendent under him. He said, "You know, [John], my advice to new trustees is that if they jump every time somebody barks, they're going to be up in the air most of the time." That's true, because there's a lot of barking. (John, p. 31)

Thus, power and authority were derived from the exercise of judgment in determining issues of importance, "educating" trustees on the 'big picture" rather than upon resolving individual concerns, and in suggesting appropriate responses to be taken by the Board.

George

Early in his story, George commented on the importance of relationships at the Board level and provided numerous examples in which he worked extremely hard to not only establish those relationships, but to maintain them as well. One example concerned the degree to which he could exercise influence over potential and incumbent trustees by providing them with sufficient information to make informed opinions about the state of affairs in the school district. This view was consistent with George's image of himself as an educator, presenting differing points of view, substantiated by facts, to facilitate the learning of others. While he was somewhat deprecating regarding the sincerity of his actions with the new trustees ("I think there's an element of sincerity about it. . . . But, I want people, . . . to feel proud of this district . . . and to feel . . . they're competent to speak." [George, p. 4]), his actions were consistent with his views on the role of the superintendent: "In looking at my role and talking to trustees, . . . I say to them, 'There are two sides to this question.' I suppose that's bringing my values and what I think I am and my role is, I think, to make them better trustees, to make them well-educated representatives of the educational community " (George, p. 5).

He used his position at the Board level to keep peace with trustees by ensuring trustees clearly understood each other's positions: "I've come awfully close and there are times when I have gone the day after to try to mend fences and to say to a trustee, 'You know, this is what the individual is really trying to say'" (George, p. 5). While his tactics were representative of his values on the importance of understanding positions advanced by others, George also demonstrated he placed strong value on his own survival as superintendent: "My motives are again suspect, because I don't know if I'm of the opinion that if trustees fight with each other, sooner or later, I become the battle ground. So, it's in my interest to go out and get them to understand each other" (George, p. 6). This latter view was expressed again: If trustees are disagreeing with each other on a personal basis, George felt they would soon begin to fight not only with each other, but also "on you and with you [as superintendent]" (George, p. 6).

Sound relationships at the Board level were also viewed as fundamental in maintaining a common focus for the school system. George's comments on the danger of a split Board during contract negotiations were also indicative of the "big picture":

> [In] salary negotiations, you don't want a Board split on that particular question. You've got to have unity. Yes, I intervened if you like and did it knowingly, and we acted harmoniously but it's a part that I work at--keeping that harmony. I think it's a key job of the superintendent to keep that harmony. (George, p. 6)

Harmony at the Board level was extremely important to George and he took steps, situational in nature, to keep the peace. However, he also worked hard to be seen to be neutral:

> [I do] my best to stay out of it most of the time but if I think that there's something I can do, yes, I'll try to do something. I try not to get caught at it. Don't leave footprints in the snow if I can. And so, I'll do any number of things. All the way from "Why don't we have lunch?" to "I'm going to meet with the two of you and let's talk this thing out so we can stop, get to understand each other." Lots of times, I'll say, "It would be a good idea if someone else talked to those individuals." If we have had 20 such instances since I've been here, probably they've been handled in 20 different ways. (George, p. 7)

He also used his regular and systematic contact with trustees and the school system personnel to anticipate problems before they became actuality since this was "healthier" (George, p. 7): "You get to stay ten years if you work that way" (George, p. 7). In another comment he indicated just how important staying 10 years was for him: "You're damn right it is [important to stay for 10 years]" (George, p. 7)!

Two other values were reflected in comments George made later in his story. The first dealt with the degree of openness he practiced with all segments of the organization, although the comment was made in relationship to the Board: "I try, as much as possible, to have a 'no secrets' organization" (George, p. 17). His value on openness was not based on pragmatic reasons. Rather, George felt commitment could be achieved if people had knowledge of issues and plans to address them: "I want people to believe, commit, accept these are their schools. . . . There are kids out there. They want to be taught. We need to teach them and do whatever we can do to improve that. I find that secrets frequently get in the way [of doing that]" (George, p. 17). The benefits of a "no secrets" organization were seen in George's relationship with trustees, particularly those who sat as trustees prior to George's appointment as superintendent:

> In my evaluations, trustees who were here, let's say before [I came here], frequently comment that "They never get surprised." There are no surprises around here. It's a dull place to be a trustee. (George, p. 18)

George's practice was to give trustees all of the information available to him. With nothing held back, there was no reason for trustees to take umbrage. As George noted, "I do my best to give them information. New trustees will get all of this information. They will know as much about it as I do. Or, as little about it as I do" (George, p. 18).

The second crucial value for George was trust. Near the end of his story, George commented on trust between the superintendent and the Board. Trust emerged in the description of a school opening which George felt was occurring prior to the election for purely political reasons. While he disagreed with the opening, and was clearly unhappy with both the motivation underpinning it and the amount of work the school was to undertake to make it a success, George noted,

> not only [would I not subvert the opening], it will be an opening that they will look good at. They will look good at and I will be there and I will work just as hard at making a speech for that as I would if I was believing in it. (George, p. 36)

In regard to the matter of trust, George commented,

> [it takes a long time for that level of trust to develop but] it helps when you come in after somebody who wasn't trusted at all. It really helps. It makes it [easy]. The first time you tell them something they've never heard of before, they look up and say "Oh!" So, it was easy. But I don't think I'd do anything else. (George, p. 36)

Nowhere was this degree of trust reflected as highly as in discussions about the involvement of the Board in administrative matters. This area, so commonly identified by superintendents as a source of conflict between the Board and the superintendent, was not a problem for George or his Board because of the trust each placed in the other. George provided some background illustrative of his faith in the Board and theirs in him:

> I honestly think that many trustees would like to be the superintendent! And, I look at them and [think that they think that they can do twice the job for half as much]. I don't need any rate busters. [In my present situation], I don't think that there is a solid line between policy and administration and I've said to the Board, on a variety of occasions, "From time to time, I will fish on your side of the lake and from time to time, you'll fish in mine. But, let's recognize that we're both fishing in the wrong place." But, they've been good that way. They really have. As I said, from time to time, they'll go on the wrong side, but usually, it's always been with the very best of intentions. They've never really said, "You're going to screw this up!" (George, pp. 42-43)

George felt trustees were comfortable with the manner in which he exercised the discretion available to him in making decisions. It was in this area that trust was clearly enunciated as a critical value for George:

> So much of it is in that horrible word "trust" and I guess, if you're a trustee, you need to trust. You get trustees who don't trust [and cannot be trusted]. And that's important as well. Very important! (George, pp. 43-44)

Later in his story, George again mentioned the importance of trust in maintaining his relationship with the trustees. This comment was made in regard to providing information to trustees during and after Board meetings:

> If a trustee asks a question, I answer the question. If I don't have the information at that time, I send it off [to all of them] saying "Trustee [X] was asking the following question, and here's the answer." Sneaky in a way, I suppose, but nevertheless it's part of that whole business of . . . they've got to trust me! If they don't, I'm dead. So, I work at that. I don't think I work at that. I try to be trustworthy. They know. (George, p. 38)

The degree of trust George enjoyed with his Board was reflected in his views on the manner in which power and authority were exercised and the impact both had on others. First, in recommending courses of action to the Board, George felt he had been supported. Second, George very carefully chose people to work with him and then set standards for their performance:

> Whenever I've gone to [the Board], and I've gone to them on a variety of occasions with a gifted program proposal, for example, or most recently, two or three years ago, [for] more money [for] computers, [they supported me]. I suppose I do most of my facilitating by making sure that there are people like [the Deputy Superintendent] or [other Central Office personnel] or other people that are around here. I am very choosy, if you like, about the people I want to have work here. I have impossibly high standards for them. But they really exceed those measures. They work very well with teachers. (George, pp. 10-11)

Four key elements emerged from George's conversation: (1) Rather than directing and controlling others, he chose to facilitate and assist them; (2) by carefully choosing those to whom he had delegated specific authority to help others, George was able to impact others in ways which he felt were both desirable and appropriate; (3) George reciprocated the trust the Board had placed in him by placing trust in others; and (4) by setting high expectations or performance, others strove to achieve them: "I just expect perfection. You know. And, obviously, we never reach it" (George, p. 11).

All four were necessary since George believed ownership in taking actions was far more desirable than directing a course of action after unilaterally deciding the action was the appropriate one to take:

> These are their kids. They need to offer the best programs that they can to kids. And if they say this is the best program and that means that we need to change what we're doing, fair enough. I guess that's ownership. But it's entirely different from me saying, "I have met with myself. We've cogitated deeply and we have agreed that this is the best way to go." I just can't see that. (George, p. 12)

George's reference to a reflective practice perspective indicated he could not possibly have all of the answers to all of the problems and must, therefore, seek consultation with and the involvement of others in decision-making. Further comments supported this view:

> The nature of the business that we're in, I think, makes [unilateral decisions after consulting with oneself impossible]. So, for me to say, "This is the best way to do it" [is wrong]. I would rather say, "Tell me!" (George, pp. 12-13)

Perhaps because of George's trust in others, his belief in empowering and facilitating others, setting expectations for performance, and respect for differing points of view, he did not feel uncomfortable with using the power and authority vested in his position:

> I probably have but never, again, in the context of where we are and what we do. I don't think it's ever been anything that I've had difficulty living with. I think if there's anything that keeps me awake after a Board Meting it's I wished I had thought of this explanation for something. Yes, [I second guess myself], very much so. [But], I've never had that "Go close that school. Go fire that guy. Or go get rid of that principal!" (George, p. 24)

George's ability to influence courses of events at the Board table was a critical component of using his power and authority effectively. Second guessing was a phenomenon he had to live with since he could not think of everything all the time. Notwithstanding this limitation, he was critical of himself since he may have viewed the circumstance as indicative of a less than effective use of his power of influence. However, in areas involving personnel who did not meet expectations, George was able to use power of position to shape courses of events, particularly in regard to continuing employment or transfer. In these instances, George demonstrated empathy for the position of others, although, in one case, he was outraged by the behaviour of one individual, particularly since this behaviour was contrary to the tenets of the Catholic system in which he worked.

George described the transfer of a vice-principal to another school. While he described the outcome as one with which the Board was happy "particularly since there was no blood on the walls" (George, p. 2), he felt great empathy for the person transferred. In the end, the individual thanked George not only for insisting upon the move, but also for the manner in which the situation was handled. George gave clues to his character in dealing with such matters, particularly since he was as concerned for the individual as he was for achieving standards of performance:

> I don't like doing that kind of thing. I will do it when I must and I like to think that probably I must earlier than some people. But I try, I will never do it without meeting with the individual and saying [here is the situation]. The guy wants to shout at somebody, he wants to know who's doing this to him, easy, it's me. You want to holler at me, go ahead. I don't mind. I get paid big money to be yelled at, so go ahead. (George, p. 25)

George also spoke at length of the importance of being aware of how the individual affected was reacting to the situation:

> I don't think I ever put control into that context. I just felt that this guy was going to get killed if he stayed in that school. I went to two or three staff meetings and [saw he had] a real problem and worse than that, he didn't even know it. At that time, he felt terribly humiliated. By October, he said, "Why didn't you do this five years ago? I didn't know that I could enjoy myself as much as I am now." And, all I could think of is, "Yea, why the hell didn't I do it five years ago?" [However], it was not at all pleasant. (George, p. 25)

The second personnel issue concerned a caretaker who was engaged in a pornographic business venture both inside and outside school hours. Ultimately, the caretaker was dismissed and launched a lawsuit against the school district. George described his thoughts and views on the matter:

> The case is, was he treated fairly? Yes! No doubt about it! I die by that. I'm happy to go to court and if they say, "Well tell me, was he treated fairly?" Probably too much so. We put up with a lot of crud. This was a guy who was running a movie rental film agency on the side specializing in pornography. And convicted for pirating pornography. Frankly, I don't want a guy like that in our school system so I'd rather pay a little bit. Now we terminated him totally on the grounds of not doing the job here. He runs a pornographic business on the side, that's his business. But, on the other hand, you're looking at who he is and what schools are, to say nothing of what Catholic schools are supposed to be, and this guy will not do what his superiors tell him to do because he's tired out. (George, p. 26)

While George was concerned with matters of justice, he was also concerned with the effect of the individual on the moral integrity of the school and the school district. Clearly, George was willing to take a stand and take appropriate action in dismissing the individual and reinforcing his beliefs in what behaviours should characterize a Catholic school system.

Finally, George used his power to empower others to enable them to be successful. While he recognized the success of others reflected favourably on himself, selfish reasons did not motivate George to operate in such a manner:

> I hate to have somebody come to me and say, "I've got ulcers [from the stress]". I like to think that people don't get ulcers if they work here. I don't have ulcers. I like to think that I don't give them. Maybe one of the nicest things that has been said about me was said by [a trustee]. He went around and asked people what they thought of me. "As a principal, what do you think of this guy? What is the biggest thing that he gives you?" And the answer was that I let people grow. I thought, "Gee, that's nice." I like that. I never heard that before and I was very much flattered by it. I never really thought that I wanted people [to grow]. We have somebody new taking a spot this year and this person came in and said, "I need to revise policy." I said "Good. Take the book away. Revise it. Bring it back. It would be good for you." She said, "I thought you always did this." That's one of the myths around this place. I just take the credit for it (Laughter)! (George, p. 29)

A second comment reflects on George's views of the importance of empowering others through encouraging and facilitating their use of discretion:

> [I want people to go and grow]. People coming into their jobs and leaving six feet taller. I like that kind of thing. I've said to people when they started here, "When you leave here, I want you to leave with an awful lot more fat on your head than you had when you came in." (George, pp. 29-30)

In the overall context of the school system, George saw his position as contributing to an atmosphere of caring and the *raison d'être* for the Catholic school system:

> I know what I'd like us to be. I like to think that I'm contributing to it. The vision, why we're a Catholic school system, the vision I suppose, should have a supernatural sort of element to it. I think they should care for each other and I believe very, very strongly that we should care for each other and make no more noise, as Catholics, by what we do than what we say. Certainly, what we say is important, because sometimes people have an opportunity to hear. [Our Employee Assistance Program represents] . . . a vision, if you like, that we do what we can to demonstrate that we care for each other. Sometimes that caring takes the form of "You should go to another school. You are not helping yourself or us or anybody else. You'll be a better person if you leave." I try to do that with some kind of . . . . I need to live with myself. I try [to allow the individual to keep his dignity intact]. (George, pp. 30-31)

Thomas

Early in his story, Thomas outlined his essential point of view of the role of the superintendent as assisting others to be as successful as they could be such that the students being served were positively affected as well:

> I guess the ultimate successes for me in my professional life would be that every staff member that I work with, at some point in time, is confident and happy, and feels success in what they're doing and is given the freedom to expand, to achieving those successes to the point that they feel they want to, that they're able to. (Thomas, pp. 11-12)

In this context, power was seen as empowering, assisting others to be the best they can be within constraints experienced in the environment. Interdependence, rather than dependence or operating with constant direction, was seen to be highly desirable. However, interdependence was achieved by a common goal towards which all worked. As superintendent, it was his responsibility to articulate what was important for the school system as it sought to provide service to students:

> [In] talking [about] interdependence, the thought crossed my mind that I would have trouble delegating and people taking responsibility and accepting consequences as an action of theirs, but that's not how I'm seeing it. Success for our kids is generated in this business that we're in [by] everybody working together toward the common goal that we share. (Thomas, p. 5)

The importance of the mission statement as a source of power or, rather, empowerment, not only for Thomas, but also for all others was reflected in a comment Thomas made about achieving the mission:

> I don't know if we'll ever achieve that mission; I mean, that's an ideal. We're still putting that mission into practice, and I think we'll continue to do that for as long as we exist. The thing about that mission statement is that it--again, when I talked about collaboration--that mission statement was developed, actually, before I got here. The beginnings of it were started when I was [working elsewhere]. We finalized it shortly after I got here. When I talk about interdependence, when I talk about collaborative efforts, that mission statement was not developed in isolation by our trustees or by my predecessor or any one single individual; it was developed as a district. We had input from parents, we had input from kids, we had input from teachers, everybody that was a stakeholder and from our parish. It's all-encompassing. (Thomas, p. 6)

Thomas also recognized the power of obtaining feedback for the efforts of the school system, since this feedback not only served to reaffirm directions taken, but also served to identify actions which were less than satisfactory so that corrections could be made. However, those comments also reflected on Thomas:

> I guess that if positive comments are being made about our system, about our teachers, about what's happening within the system, or negative comments, [they] reflect directly on me because I'm told that the buck stops at my desk. I'm only as good as the people that I work with in my job, and I know what kind of people we have here. I know the kind of indirect assessment we do with our teachers or staff by way of comments made about our system. We're doing a job. (Thomas, p. 8)

In interpreting Thomas' comment, it can be seen that a number of value choices were expressed: (1) Thomas recognized the final responsibility for the success of the school system and those in it rested with him; (2) one way to ensure quality instruction was provided to students was to engage the best qualified personnel possible; and (3) monitoring of the work of others ensured Thomas knew the quality of instruction because he knew the people.

Another critical comment was made somewhat later in Thomas' story and this dealt with recognizing good performance, the power of this recognition in affirming the actions of others, and in securing the input from others in decisions. In regard to the latter, Thomas noted he can use his power and authority

> [to impact these people] by giving them a sense of professionalism: I allow them to be what they were hired to be. We provide them opportunities for input. One of the things that I constantly keep reminding myself about is that we have to continually acknowledge the good in what's happening with our people, let them know that--I'll give you an example. Two letters crossed my desk this year from parents. Being in this business, the community or the public in general is quick to

> criticize when there's a problem, but when things are going well, there tends to be a silence out there. (Thomas, pp. 8-9)

In regard to the recognition of performance, Thomas noted:

> When I get something like that [i.e., positive feedback from parents], I think it's truly worthy of celebrating, because you don't get it often. So I took the opportunity to phone those parents and let them know how much we appreciated that, and that I was going to take the opportunity to share that, not just with my office, but share that with those people that they were talking about and with our Board of Trustees, and I did that. Letting the teachers know, letting the staff of that school know that there is a parent or a set of parents out there who don't take for granted what they've got, but they also took the opportunity and the time to share that kind of information with us. (Thomas, p. 9)

While recognition of performance, selection of personnel, and monitoring performance were seen to be key aspects of Thomas' use of power and authority to meet specific responsibilities he had as superintendent, he was also called upon to demonstrate other values in support of a principle in which he deeply believed. The segment of Thomas' story dealing with the dispute between the public school system and Catholic parents over the right of access of those parents to a Catholic education for their children forced Thomas to use authority and power stemming from influence, knowledge, and credibility. While Thomas sought to establish and maintain a relationship between his district and the public district, he was unable to reconcile and justify the actions taken by the public district with the maintenance of that relationship. In other words, the costs were too great.

While Thomas and his Board could not be seen providing overt support to Catholic parents who were in dispute with the public district, they could and did offer moral and procedural assistance. For Thomas, the knowledge he had and the access to other information were far too important not to be used:

> What drives me to that goal is the commitment from those parents whom I've talked to who are in that situation, and the lengths to which they've gone to have that happen for their kids. The commitment is there, and I guess, when I see that, it definitely strikes a chord with me and suggests to me that if I'm not there to help them, and I don't have that same commitment with them, I shouldn't be in this business. (Thomas, p. 13)

The moral responsibility Thomas felt to those parents and their children was such that involvement was made mandatory. At the same time, Thomas knew that he and his Board had to be seen to be free of ulterior motives in assisting the parents in forming their own Catholic four-by-four school districts which would ultimately amalgamate with his jurisdiction. At a parent meeting, Thomas

> purposely [stayed away]. I told them that I wasn't going to get involved in that way. [I told them], "Because I have to maintain a reputation for our Board, and we've got to be clean in this thing." None of our trustees went either. I told them that we would go to the extent that we would supply them with any information they needed, but I said, "Any guidance or leadership, I'm sorry, but I just have to back off." (Thomas, p. 15)

He indicated he "wanted to stay neutral, but I'm not sure I did" (Thomas, p. 17). Power, or rather empowerment, was provided to the parent group through moral support: "Definitely moral support was there; moral support was there from our Board of Trustees, from me personally. Maybe through body language I probably gave people the impression that they should seek alternatives" (Thomas, p. 17).

In this instance, Thomas felt that power came from principle and that actions taken were fully justified in light of that principle:

> I guess if we were to champion anything or to involve ourselves in--not the promotion of it because we didn't; champion is the better word. It was based upon the right to Catholic education as opposed to resolving our financial difficulties by promoting them to form as a tax grab. (Thomas, p. 27)

Other incidents Thomas described provided valuable insights as to his values in using power and authority. The first involved the resolution of the parent-school dispute over the manner in which student achievement was reported. Rather than adopting a solution-giver approach, Thomas sought to actively involve both the school staff and the parents in deriving a commonly accepted course of action. This course of action was achieved through enhanced understanding of positions held by both parties. He adopted a similar approach in exercising influence with the Board of Trustees. Predicated on full and open disclosure of all relevant information and a recommendation for action, Thomas felt his responsibilities as an educational leader were being partially met:

> The thing that I found that works the best--and I personally don't believe that my role as a superintendent is to have my recommendations rubber stamped. I see my job as to provide information. I communicate regularly with our Board, individually and as a group. I keep them informed of anything that I see has the potential of becoming an issue well in advance of Board Meetings. I don't wait to spring that on them; I keep them informed as to what's going on. I think being above Board, honest, and up front with our trustees have worked well with me. I don't hide anything from them, whether it's controversial or whether it affects me in some way, shape, or form; I keep them abreast of pretty much everything that goes on. (Thomas, pp. 32-33)

Recommendations were consensually developed by Thomas and his group of administrators prior to the Board meeting. Thomas viewed his relationships with those administrators in a very positive sense and did not feel threatened if a recommendation made by that group was one with which he disagreed:

> I've got just a tremendous group of administrators that I work with here. We've developed a very good relationship, and prior to any of those recommendations coming forward to the Board, these people will come to me and seek my advice, and we'll sit down and collaboratively, again, put the recommendation together. If I feel personally that it's not in the best interests of the district, I will tell them right up front that I personally can't support it, and these are my reasons for it. And we will sit and dialogue about that, but I certainly will not discourage them from going forward to the Board with it, and I won't try to short-circuit them by contacting trustees and saying, "This thing is coming to you and I don't support it." If they ask me at the Board level for my opinion, which they do on most of those recommendations, I tell them up front, "I personally don't think it's in our best interests to do so." But, it's not something I haven't already shared with the people who originate the recommendation. (Thomas, pp. 33-34)

The second instance in which Thomas was seen to use power related to his actions with staff members in one school who did not feel ownership in or commitment to the district's mission statement. Upon commencing employment, Thomas made it abundantly clear to his Board that actions would have to be taken and that political fallout might occur. However, this fallout would have to be weathered since the issue was too important to ignore for political reasons. Thomas secured the Board's support and moved to address the issue. Through discussions in the school, Thomas re-emphasized the district's mission and asked those who could not commit to it to take some steps which would result in commitment to the mission or seeking employment elsewhere:

> I'm looking at two particular individuals, and they knew what was going on, and I said, "You know, my preference would be that you made that similar choice, [but], if you can't buy in, then you opt out rather than me making that decision for you."

> I said, "I prefer to operate that way. It's cleaner; it's less traumatic for anybody. Let's deal with it in that way."
>
> I had two people take me up on the offer. They came in and they resigned, and they said, "We can't buy into the--" and I said, "I respect you for being up front and honest with me." We parted friends. There was no difficulty with it whatsoever. They left, I got a call back from one later on, and they thanked me because I helped this individual get a job in a setting that I figured would be most appropriate for them, and it was in a purely academic challenge program. (Thomas, p. 36)

Thomas' actions not only demonstrated effective use of power and authority, but also his value on maintaining relationships with others. In an early part of his story, Thomas commented on the necessity for empathy and understanding when dealing with others, particularly in conflict situations:

> When we're dealing with people, I think you have to have an understanding that if there is a concern expressed by somebody to me in my role as a superintendent or as a parent or as a spouse or as a neighbor or as a member of society, I think we have to really appreciate that concern being expressed by that other party is legitimate; otherwise it wouldn't be expressed. I think we have to take time to listen; we have to take time to show empathy and understanding. (Thomas, p. 6)

In a very personal sense, Thomas felt it was incumbent on him to be sensitive to other people:

> If I'm not sensitive to the people that I'm working with, then again, I don't think I should be here. I think that's critical to this position. As an educator I think you have to be sensitive, and if you're not and if you're not listening--I hate to see people suffer. (Thomas, p. 29)

His discussion on the manner in which recommendations were prepared for the Board reflected his sensitivity to the views of others, in this instance, the administrators. The relationship Thomas had with those individuals was predicated on honesty, openness, trust, and a willingness to disagree without fear of repercussions.

Peter

From the point of view of authority, power, and relationships, Peter placed a great deal of importance on the very nature of the Catholic school system in which he worked. This created greater expectations for him and for those who were charged with providing service to the students. In this sense, Peter exercised both power and authority, not so much by practicing his faith but by modeling his faith to others:

> Something I find very difficult is working with some staff members who either can't buy into the vision that we have for Catholic schools or don't wish to, and it's usually a mix of both. They've never really accepted their faith commitment as their own, therefore to start acting as Christians or as Catholics and doing things, being involved in activities or whatever or conducting themselves in such a manner that others would recognize them as being Catholic and Christian. I find that very difficult; I find it very difficult. (Peter, p. 4-5)

Peter did not expect any more of others in this regard than he expected of himself. However, his strong commitment to the faith caused others, in his estimation to feel uncomfortable because they could not match his commitment. His strong belief in modeling was again evident as he commented upon his involvement in his parish:

> It's not personal and it's not professional; it's both. I'm not there because I'm the superintendent; I would be there anyway. But I'm also there because I'm the superintendent because I believe I show by being a servant as well. (Peter, p. 5)

Peter's attitude about serving was reflected in his use of authority and power to lead and he felt people trusted him to use both to accomplish good ends. When he commented upon being recognized for his successes, he noted success not only came from his actions but also from "what they allowed me to do as well. I think it's always kind of a two-way street: I can't exhibit leadership unless others are prepared to allow it, and I understand that" (Peter, p. 11). This authority and power also carried with them concomitant responsibilities--responsibilities to serve others to the best degree possible. His comments about a school visit and his findings are instructive, not only for the expectations Peter held of others, but also for himself:

> I do not appreciate people who I don't believe are putting out. I think our job is so important to our society. It shouldn't even be called a job, of course; this is a vocation, guys. I mean, we get paid for it, but it's too important to have people say, "Do you really expect that much for a plan?" Yes, I do, because I do it of myself. I would never expect someone else to do what I don't expect of myself, and to be not as well prepared as you can be--you can never reach the end, but I mean, come on, folks, give me a good honest effort, and I believe that you'll receive the rewards for that as well. It's not up to me to reward them, but it'll come from the student. (Peter, p. 12)

Peter's view that education can make a difference in the lives of students was a primary value which he held. In a discussion with a school principal, Peter used his position of authority to reinforce this view with others:

> I believe that we can make a difference. I just had a fairly long discussion with one of our principals and I kept hammering away at that point. I said, "I don't think that we can say, "This is happening and that is happening", and then we just say, "Well, you know, that's happened." I said, "We can make a difference!" I guess it's grounded in my belief in kids; that's where I guess my philosophy's coming from. It's grounded there, but at the same time I believe that we in education can make a profound impact on kids, and that's what motivates me, is that I believe we can make things better. (Peter, p. 15)

In recounting a story of the successes enjoyed by a young student who had been viewed as a problem child, Peter noted he used his position to recognize the contributions teachers had made to this child's progress: "It would have been so easy to say five years ago, 'We can't handle [this child].' Now he's going to be a contributing member of society. What an awesome responsibility has been taken so seriously by that staff" (Peter, p. 18). In recognizing the staff's contribution, Peter said, "For all you staff members who had such an impact upon [this child], I compliment you because that comes back to why we're here. We're here because we can have an impact upon kids" (Peter, p. 18)!

While Peter was happy to recognize the contributions of staff to the education of children, he was distressed the homogeneity of the Catholic system was eroded to such an extent that members of staff were not supporting the vision of the school system:

> I'm thinking, for example, of some of our staff members who, haven't quite bought into the vision. At the same time as they haven't really bought in, they know as well that they can't undermine, because they will be jumped on, because people will say, "I thought this was a Catholic school." (Peter, p. 24)

In this context, Peter used his own authority and power base, primarily that of influence and modeling, to set a tone for others to follow in their own actions: Peter had to model fundamental beliefs to others. In his dealings with culturally intolerant parents who nevertheless sent their children to a Catholic school system, in advocating sex education for all while respecting the wishes of those who did not want sex education taught, in advocating for the teaching and modeling of the essential tenets of the Catholic faith in the schools, in striking a balance between liberal and conservative religious views, and in dealing with staff who did not fully accept the aims of the school system or the tenets of their faith, Peter used the power of influence, primarily through the modeling of appropriate behaviours and setting of directions, to have others change their own behaviours. In addition, Peter believed strongly in the dignity and respect for individuals, the need to demonstrate empathy and understanding for others, and the need to use varying forms of power and authority to deal with instances where performance and individual dignity were at stake.

Peter's degree of influence with his Board was a recurring theme in the analysis of his story. Perhaps one of the most significant comments was made in regard to the stress he felt when the Board would arbitrarily take a position which did not represent the tenets of the Catholic nature of the school system nor of education in general:

> One [cause of stress] is in treatment of people. Boards at times, and especially because they're involved in different industries and often are managers themselves or would like to be managers, or are really disappointed at their own work, can be pretty callous with staff; not callous, but pretty harsh: Making rules in kind of an [arbitrary fashion]. That really bothers me. (Peter, p. 24)

Another comment was indicative of his basic value on the worth of people and the manner in which they should be treated, especially in the educational enterprise: "Our industry is people; whether it's the clients or whoever, our customers are people; and the people who are implementing our programs and implementing our visions are people, and we have to keep that in mind. Without a lot of good people around we're not going to do terribly well" (Peter, p. 24).

These beliefs were put to the test when he was forced to deal with three critical personnel issues in the school system. The first involved the counseled and voluntary resignation of designation by a school principal. While the individual concerned was seen by Peter to be very competent in public relations, compassionate in his dealing with others, and "espouse[d] Christ-like qualities in the best fashion that I've seen" (Peter, p. 24), the individual did not experience success in his principalship and the Board had "been after me for four or five years to get rid of the principal, not so much because he wasn't competent, [but] because, in the eyes of the parents, [he was not as well liked as the previous principal]" (Peter, p. 24). Ultimately, Peter convinced the individual to resign his designation because public, parental, and Board pressure would not have been conducive to success. Nonetheless, Peter still expressed outrage over the lack of justice the principal received: "My biggest concern was the fact that we were not being just to this individual" (Peter, p. 25). In short, Peter felt others had as much responsibility in the lack of success of the school principal as did the principal himself.

In a second instance, Peter felt no remorse in terminating a principal's designation since the principal was not treating students and some staff members with appropriate fairness, empathy, and understanding. The staff of the school reinforced the principal's view that discipline had to be extremely stern and students had to experience significant consequences for misbehaviour. While Peter worked with the principal to effect behaviour changes, a final and major incident precipitated the decision to terminate:

> I wrote him one day and point blank told him that what he had done to a student--he had denied for his own selfish reasons--denied a child an opportunity to go to the Olympics when they were in Calgary, and I wrote him and I said, "This is one of the darkest days of my educational career." I just could not believe that there are professional educators who would use their positions to not allow a child--and it wasn't even the child's fault. He had a conflict with the parents, and the adults were fighting. He did not allow the child to go on the field trip, and I said, "I cannot condone that." (Peter, pp. 28-29)

Peter's initial outrage over this behaviour was used to justify the termination:

> That kind of stuff I take to heart because that child, I don't know what she ever did in education after that. I can still see where her parents live outside of that community, because I went to visit them to get this thing reconciled. I said, "Look, I'll sit over your kitchen table, we'll get this worked out," and we had it worked out, and he didn't have to lose face, he didn't have to lose anything, and the S.O.B. wouldn't move. So after that I didn't feel badly when we had to move on getting rid of him. (Peter, p. 29)

The principal abused his position by treating a student in such a manner. In addition, the principal, in dealing with a staff member who was having marital problems, showed a lack of empathy for the individual and a lack understanding for individual situations. For Peter,

> that's where the conflict for me, almost kind of ended at that point because I no longer felt sympathy for him, because I normally--I think we all do--kind of feel for the underdog. In this case, after I saw that he was prepared to use his position for his own selfish reasons to deny a child . . . who hadn't done anything to him . . . and I thought okay. (Peter, p. 30)

For Peter, the principal's behaviour represented an inappropriate use of discretionary power. Accordingly, the individual had to be held accountable: "That's where I would see the standard [i.e., use of discretion] as being much more rigorous for a principal, and even more rigorous for a superintendent" (Peter, p. 30)!

The third instance involved a teacher who was experiencing emotional problems and had asked the Board for a medical leave of absence. After obtaining legal advice, Peter spoke to the Board about the issue:

> Legally, that's all you have to do, but morally, this is what I would recommend to you: We pay her, we put her on sick leave, we tear up that other one, and we put her on sick leave. She is not healthy, and that's why we have sick-leave benefits. I recall even saying to that Board--and I'm pretty close to the exact quotation--I said, "We don't often get to walk in Christ's shoes, but I wonder what Christ would have done in this case." And they bought it. (Peter, p. 31)

Peter's arguments were based on both legal and moral grounds and he advised the Board that the moral obligation took precedence over the legal and contractual concerns. His reaction to the Board decision was also instructive: "I was so proud of the Board that night, I just said, 'Look you guys, you did the right thing'" (Peter, pp. 31-32). The influence of the superintendent on Board decision-making can be clearly seen in another comment Peter related: "They allowed me to make my presentation and [the Chairman] looked at me and said, 'Peter, you really believe that, don't you?", and I said, 'Yes', so they [rescinded] her unpaid leave of absence" (Peter, pp. 31-32).

Peter held high expectations of himself for the manner in which he used power and authority:

> Rarely am I overly disappointed with decisions that have been made, but I'm very conscious of the fact of the position I hold, and I try to present when I'm observing teachers, trying to make them as comfortable as possible and trying to be as--if I see a teacher who's doing poorly, I'm not going to give that person the thirteen best suggestions I can think up off the top of my head. I'll try to say, "Okay, here are one or two things; why don't you try working on these?" (Peter, p. 35)

The Interpretive Context

These superintendents placed high value on maintaining the dignity and worth of individuals, particularly in those instances where decisions about employment or discipline had to be made. Second, the value of empathy and understanding for the positions of others was frequently noted by all superintendents. In instances where the severity of the issue was such that behaviours of others were viewed as somewhat reprehensible (for example, the dismissal of the caretaker for reasons of incompetence and selling pornographic materials and the dismissal of a principal for inappropriate use of discretion in dealing with students and teachers), the degree of empathy and understanding were less in evidence and matters of contract or justice (legal remedies) tended to predominate. Third, superintendents used their power to empower others, primarily through establishing structures and processes by which input from others could be sought. While process was very important, focusing on the substance of the school system was always in the forefront for the superintendents. By focusing on substance as well as process, the superintendents exercised directive and values-driven leadership.

An analysis of the stories has shown that resorting to directive leadership in the superintendency is premised on some fundamental assumptions about people, purposes (i.e., substance), and process: (1) The superintendents could adopt the point of view that individuals in the organization need to be pushed, prodded, cajoled, or motivated to do things through the use of both external controls and internal commitment; (2) the school system needs a strong sense of purpose to unite people toward a common goal; (3) the goals and the universal commitment toward the goals are more important than the processes used to achieve them and action takes precedence over reaction.

In regard to the first assumption of directive leadership, these superintendents were apt to use their power and authority in a direct and visible fashion when the self-interest of other groups and individuals took precedence over the provision of services to students or when self-interest (shown even by the performance of others) precluded the attainment of standards necessary in any and all aspects of the organization. These superintendents focused on the self-interests of teachers, represented through the activities of the Alberta Teachers' Association to which all teachers, by law, must belong. Not all superintendents, particularly those in Catholic systems, felt that teachers' interests tended to surmount the services provided to children. However, all but one superintendent referred to instances where the abuse of position, through inappropriate actions or performance, had to be dealt with and contracts of employment terminated. In these cases, considerable concern was given to process, especially in the legal context, but not at the expense of the ultimate goal of ensuring the provision of high quality services to both the organization and its clients.

This did not mean, however, that these superintendents adapted their leadership style to accommodate the vagaries of self-interest. They suggested that the opposite was true. While the superintendents recognized the various groups in the system would try to advance their own interests, they did not make counteracting this self-interest their main goal. When occasions arose where self-interest was patently obvious, they took a stand and combated it. During and after the issue resolution, they continued to focus on the goals of the system and offered ideas, which were coherent and served a higher purpose, to direct the behaviour and commitment of others to issues of substance. By fostering a sense of achievement, by stretching strengths rather than emphasizing weaknesses, by encouraging the use of discretion within appropriate boundaries which were philosophically and pragmatically determined, by holding others accountable for this discretion, by empowering others to participate in discussion, analysis, and making decisions on issues, and by emphasizing ideas which focused on the provision of the best possible services to students, these superintendents directly affected the motivations of others, the overall quality of decisions within the educational system, and the services which the system provided.

None of these actions took place in isolation--they were closely related to the direction provided by the mission of the organization. Interestingly, some superintendents chose to have the political arm of the school system, the Board, actively develop the mission statement for the system, but the superintendents' influence was clearly seen behind the scenes. Some worked closely with individual trustees and provided advice on how best the mission statement should be communicated to others. Others took a more active approach and used their imagination, their judgment, and their knowledge of education to develop, in concert with the Board and others, a mission for the school system. In short, these superintendents used their own vision to create an attitude of purpose in the system and to formalize it through the adoption of that formal mission statement. This mission statement then formed the basis for what was done in the area of policy development, long- and short-range planning, assessment of progress, and for making improvements where they were deemed to be necessary.

Implicit in the superintendents' views of the mission statement was the attitude that if they did not actively influence the development of the mission statement, someone else, or some other group, would seek to advance positions, possibly to the detriment of the superintendent's vision for the system. Thus, conflicting views could serve to increase the politics in the system, de-emphasize the common purposes so assiduously sought, and reduce the quality of service provided. Further, the involvement of the superintendent ensured that a systematic analysis of the educational environment occurred prior to completing the vision statement. Thus, both vision, premised on a set of educational values, and pragmatism, based on logical, systematic, and rational analysis are, if not ensured, at least represented prior to promulgating the mission statement.

The superintendents spoke of the power of involving others in the development of the mission statement as well, since this involvement represented the value of other's opinions, facilitated the commitment of others to the document, and acknowledged others have valuable input on areas about which the superintendent may not have thought. Again, pragmatism and principles were deeply imbedded in this strategy.

Examination of the use of influence, in terms of power and authority, provided another interesting point of view. While consensus was seen to be desirable, also for reasons both pragmatic and principled, consensus, in and of itself, was not a prerequisite for taking action. Indeed, these superintendents were not prepared to compromise to achieve consensus on items which were of such critical importance to the school system. Prime among these were the financial operations (there is a bottom line beyond which expenditures cannot go), management rights, and services to children. In areas such as these, the superintendents listened to arguments of others, used persuasion and influence, and, finally, if consensus could not be reached, they were willing to stand and communicate a course of action which they deemed best. Consensus and commitment were desirable, but superintendents were prepared to have consensus develop after they made a decision. These important decisions were based on a conviction that their points of view were right, despite views to the contrary.

The second assumption, the school system needs a strong sense of purpose to unite people toward a common goal, serves to illustrate directive and values-driven leadership once again. Those superintendents who participated in the study recognized they could not be everywhere in the system at once. However, it was critically important that they sensed the goals they held for the system were understood by and influenced the behaviour of others in the system. In this regard, the overriding sense of purpose, vision, or mission was to be the primary vehicle by which they affected others. Through modeling, these messages were reinforced in and seen by others. In this manner, the power and authority of the superintendents were enhanced and others in the system had both an implicit and explicit understanding of what the superintendent wanted done. While this would not preclude some sort of political action being taken by an individual or a group, it lessened its likelihood of occurring.

The sense of purpose was also inculcated in others in the organization who acted in a leadership capacity--most notably those in the district office and those serving in an administrative capacity in the schools. In this sense, and this was exhibited most clearly by John, the superintendent acted as a coach or a mentor, helping others steer on the same course while simultaneously pointing out corrections to be made. There was also an expectation that schools would focus on similar activities, consensually developed, which directly complemented and were consistent with the priorities of the system. Rather than attempting to control and direct all of the system's activities, an impossibility given the diverse demands on the time of the superintendents, they chose to direct and control only a few key aspects of the system: monitoring and major evaluation activities (e.g., meeting with school principals on an annual basis for priority setting and, on a more regular basis, to determine progress made in achieving those priorities); spending time in the schools to exercise influence and to monitor progress; involvement in the committees established for school evaluations; establishing key policies (a theme explored in the next section); committing resources; and the engagement, placement, and possible termination of personnel. Without exception, these superintendents sought to make their school systems the best they could be, a feat they recognized was difficult and must occur over the long run. While it was recognized that perfection could never be achieved, striving for perfection was something deemed to be highly important.

Another phenomenon was the importance these superintendents placed on a major focus for the school system, particularly if that focus represented a major change. Three superintendents were involved in reconfiguring the grades in their district schools; another was involved in revamping the school entrance age; another was involved in expanding programming options; another was involved in adopting a results-based orientation; another was committed to securing more active parent involvement in the schools; and another made it very clear to his Board upon commencement of employment, that actions would have to be taken against a group of teachers who, by their actions, demonstrated they were not committed to the goals of the school system. All of these represented major points of departure for their school systems since past practices were indicative of the opposite. By focusing on clear and precise objectives and priorities for their systems, these superintendents served to direct the actions of others in the system, secure the commitment of teachers, parents, and trustees, and provide a higher quality of service to the students in the system. Just as importantly, their actions showed a significant amount of courage, since none of the initiatives was greeted with overwhelming support from groups affected by the change.

However, and despite significant opposition, and, at times, a lack of visible and demonstrable support from their school boards, the superintendents pursued their ideals and turned them into action. By doing so, they communicated to others the importance of offering a high quality of service to the clients of the system and a sense that vision, creativity, and ideas are necessary components of developing and improving the system. Further, they communicated the idea that risk is a necessary component of any change process and that risks must be taken and managed to bring about successful change. Most importantly, they showed that while process was an integral component of their plans to effect a change, the change itself--the substance of what the change was about--was most important.

The third assumption, that the goals and the universal commitment toward the goals were more important than the processes used to achieve them and that action took precedence over reaction, is clearly evidenced in how and why superintendents involved others in decision making throughout the system. Three primary considerations guided the superintendents in this choice: (1) The size and complexity of the educational system precluded superintendents and the Board from directly making every decision which needed to be made on a daily basis in the system; (2) superintendents, while they are extremely knowledgeable about the business of education and the dynamics of their own systems, were unable to possess all of the relevant facts and ideas necessary to make decisions in a unilateral manner; and (3) leadership exercised by others multiplied that of the superintendent if others were given the autonomy to make decisions in their own purview.

Clearly, the first two reasons demonstrated a tendency toward pragmatism and consequentialism (simplicity enables others, particularly the principals, to work directly and personally on problems without actively involving the superintendent); the latter involves higher principles and a belief in the ability of others to exercise discretion in an appropriate manner. Beyond these principles, the commonly held belief that those who make the decisions are more committed to them than if someone else made the decision for them reflects a value on the ability of others to make right decisions in the right way. Superintendents also exercised both power and authority in engaging personnel for the school system and then establishing expectations for their performance.

Another critical area emerged in the analysis of material and this concerned the values inherent in relationships the superintendent has with others in the school system. Relationships were viewed as critical in education since its primary purpose is to serve people. A number of key values emerged in the analysis of the stories told by the superintendents: The day-to-day relationships these superintendents had with others were developed and kept alive by on-going, personal contact with others. In these formal and informal contacts, the superintendents articulated key initiatives of the system, key beliefs, and clear directions. In addition, and just as importantly, the superintendents listened to the concerns of others, sought feedback on initiatives taken and the personal and professional vicissitudes of the individual involved, and developed and expressed empathy for the needs of others. As in the assumptions regarding power and authority, relationships with others represented both pragmatic and principled points of view.

In relation to the pragmatic view, relationships, nurtured in both formal and informal ways, facilitated communication and allowed the superintendents to determine, first hand and at the point of delivery, what the concerns of the individuals were. Access to unfiltered, accurate, and timely information allowed them to assess progress of the system, make judgments, and, possibly, suppress politicking which might occur. The last was especially important at the Board level, where the superintendents worked conscientiously to develop and maintain relationships with individual trustees, possibly to practice politicking to accomplish particular ends. In those instances where superintendent-trustee relationships could not be developed, two participants cogently and regretfully stated negative consequences could very easily accrue.

In regard to a principled view of relationships, all of these superintendents spoke of the necessity of preserving basic human dignity, especially in relationships threatened by conflict over continued employment, discipline, or inappropriate behaviour. Indeed, in those instances, such as experienced by Peter, where human dignity was violated, outrage was expressed. In some instances, the superintendent, despite the position held, was unable to prevent others, even at the Board level, from denigrating the individual. Personal experiences, as demonstrated by Leonard and George, prompted them never to treat others as they themselves were treated. As mentioned in another theme, Leonard sought never to be perceived as a "twit", one who made commitments and did not honour them, as one who abused power, or as one who did not respect the value of the individual. John believed disciplining others or taking corrective action had to be done in a sensitive manner, such that those concerned would accept the rebuke and thank him for it at the conclusion of the exercise.

Other values regarding relationships were inherent in the stories. The Catholic superintendents, in particular, were concerned that they demonstrate the three "C's" of Catholic education in all of their dealings with others: Caring; Compassion; and Christianity. George felt that Catholics in general, and he as a Catholic superintendent in particular, should make no more fuss about being Catholic in a verbal sense than they did in their actions. This should not be construed to mean the public school superintendents valued caring and compassion any less than did the Catholic superintendents; because of the nature of the public school setting, the religious base, to which all of those public school superintendents ascribed, did not receive the degree of attention paid to it by the Catholic superintendents.

Fundamental values, outlined in theme one, played a critical role in how superintendents approached relationships with others. These included the values of trust, honesty, openness, integrity, consistency, fairness, respect, tolerance of differing values and views, candor, and substance. While all superintendents expressed a strong mission in serving children by positively impacting those who serve children, and an equally strong desire to be competitive and move away from the status quo, there may very well be created an attitude in the minds of others that these superintendents are so single-minded they are not attuned to the wants, needs, and aspirations of others. Superintendents often reflected on this very notion and sometimes had to make changes in how they approached others to ensure high standards were being met (James addressed this issue very well). However, and this must be abundantly clear, when standards were not being met by others, efforts at improvement had failed, and self-interest became paramount over serving children and the goals of the system, the superintendents were prepared to move against the individual.

Whether this meant transferring the individual to another, more suitable position, or terminating the contract of employment, they did so. They viewed retaining the individual in that position as deleterious to morale, inconsistent with the stated goals and mission of the school system, and a violation of the trust placed in the school system by its clients to provide the best quality education possible to students.

Summary

The power and authority held by the superintendents were best used in influencing the course of events within the school system. While some superintendents expressed some degree of discomfort with the power and authority they held, this discomfort stemmed from having to take actions which had a negative effect upon the careers and lives of others. However, this did not mean they were reluctant to take strong action, up to and including recommending termination of contracts, when it was required. Power over individuals was tempered, to a very large degree, by developing processes which empowered others such that they could make decisions in areas where relevance and expertise applied. While involving others in decision-making was seen as desirable from a principled point of view, the involvement was also desirable from a pragmatic point of view since superintendents recognized their own limitations and expertise. Further, better quality decisions resulted from this involvement.

Superintendents were unabashed in using their power, authority, and influence in establishing direction for the system either through developing a mission statement for the system or through the development of strategic and operational plans for the system, or both. Directive leadership, consistent with the superintendents' views on providing the best possible education for students and on providing this best possible education within the financial constraints faced by the system, was a predominant leadership style of the superintendents in this study. This directive leadership style was not without costs for the superintendents for, in some cases, the style was viewed as single-mindedness, perceived by others as indicative of an unwillingness to listen to their concerns.

Superintendents also placed a very high value on accountability, not only for others, but for themselves as well. Through frequently mentioned phrases such as "The buck stops here", "The bottom line happens when you're superintendent", "If I can't manage the system, the Board will find somebody who can", "You feel the heat when you're superintendent", superintendents indicated they took their jobs very seriously. However, insisting on accountability for themselves and others did not mean a lack of empathy or understanding for others. Frequently, superintendents, particularly those in Catholic systems, mentioned they had to be "a caregiver to teachers" and others. This focus along with a simultaneous focus on doing what was best for students often caused moral dilemmas to occur for the superintendents. In the end, superintendents chose to focus on quality in and accountability for providing educational opportunities for students--this principle invariably provided guidance in resolving those moral dilemmas.

In matters of relationships, superintendents were highly conscious of the responsibility they had in working with and developing the talents of others in their school systems. Not only were relationships seen as a means to an ends, they were seen as ends unto themselves. As one superintendent commented, people have to be treated in light of some fundamental beliefs: "Honesty, integrity, treating the other person, you know, the Golden Rule: Treating them the way you would want to be treated" (John, p. 6).

Relationships with individual trustees and the entire Board were viewed in similar fashion, although superintendents stressed openness, trust, disclosure of alternatives, accountability, loyalty, and the exercise of judgment and discretion to a greater extent in their discussions about this matter than they did in relation to others. This did not mean the same values were not important in dealings with others. Rather, these values were paramount here because a great deal of their time was spent working with trustees in the political setting. Influence and leadership were also critical values in dealing with Board, although individual trustees not having a positive relationship with the superintendent chose to view influence and leadership in a negative sense, a sense best characterized by being perceived as too powerful. James illustrated this best: "They use those words--a powerful superintendent--and I direct the Board. So I sat back, and the Board doesn't view it that way. But on the other hand, when you look behind it, I have been behind a lot of the decisions" (James, p. 15).

Theme Five: Policy Development and Implementation

Introduction

Superintendents are expected to provide leadership in policy development by suggesting alternative instruments which address specific decision-making needs within the school system. However, three essential issues must be resolved in the policy process: (1) to what extent must the superintendent be concerned with the policy process; (2) to what extent must the superintendent be concerned with the substance of direction to be established within the policy; and (3) to what extent must both considerations be balanced such that process reflects the wants, needs, and desires of others without losing track of the substance needed to establish direction consistent with not only the organizational mission and values, but also with the mission, vision, and values of the superintendent?

Luke

Luke related a story which demonstrated his fundamental values in achieving educational change through the policy process. Consistent with his views on shared decision-making and encouraging others to exercise discretion in their actions, Luke noted that the implementation of the Continuity of Programming Policy (Alberta Education, 1988) reflected a change from the traditional top-down model to one characterized by the involvement of those most closely affected by the decision and policy initiative. Luke described the process:

> I'll give you an example: The Program Continuity [Policy]. We know that we have to get into that by 1993. A top-down model would have you saying, "Here's the kinds of things that we need to do: Here's the stuff; go do it." We formed a committee with representatives and administrators from each school. We met; we determined the broad parameters and purposes. They, under their chairman, decided, for example, how to go about this. They decided they would go look at some of the schools that are currently implementing program continuity. They went out and visited these schools. They came back and reported that information. They came back and developed an action plan in terms of what we're doing. It's their plan. (Luke, p. 11)

In the policy process, as in the day-to-day management of the system, Luke felt the basis for actions was based on a fundamental principle: "You delegate responsibilities and you give people the authority to proceed, and I guess you trust them to do it in a professional manner, and our people have responded very well to that" (Luke, p. 12). Attributing this style to his historical view of the necessity for consultation with others most affected by policy initiatives or directions set for the system, Luke also recognized he could not realistically make all of the policy decisions himself since he could not be everywhere in the system to gather the necessary information on which decisions must be based. Hence, for pragmatic reasons as well, Luke adopted a consultative approach in this area.

Notwithstanding Luke's prejudice for consultative, bottom-up involvement in decision-making and policy development, he recognized teachers often adopted a *quid pro quo* attitude requiring negotiations in establishing policy direction. Self-interest had to be accommodated while simultaneously focusing discussions and the ultimate resolution on the real purposes of the education system--educating students.

For Luke, the proper exercise of discretion and doing the right things were primarily related to the issue of doing what was best for students. As he stated, "Anything that we do, kids have to be the number one priority" (Luke, p. 9). Unfortunately, Luke had found that the self-interests of others, including teachers and administrators, sometimes got in the way of doing the best things for students:

> You run into that with administrators too, and you really have to work with them to re-focus their thinking, because you get the situation where the total concern is for the teacher, where the total concern should be for the student. I don't want to sound like I'm not a teacher advocate, because I still think that's critical, and I think it's important for teachers [to look after themselves too], but I don't think that the focus should be what's best for teachers; it has to be what's best for kids. But you help teachers being able to do their jobs by being considerate of them as well. (Luke, pp. 9-10)

While Luke believed that teachers become more considerate of students by having an administrative staff being more considerate of teachers, he also believed that the consideration of teachers' needs had to be placed in a position relative to the real purposes of the education system:

> You want [teachers] to still think about their families first; you still want them to be healthy; you still want them to take care of themselves. But the focus for education has to be on the students when they're here on the job. I get concerned about things like, "We have too much supervision to do." Or I'm going to program continuity, for example, and they're talking about how many days of interviews they're going to have to get into when they go into new formatting, and what kind of break are you going to give the teachers? It's like, "If I do this for you, you have to do this for me." (Luke, p. 10)

The *quid pro quo* attitude often was reflected in a negotiation stance with the members of the teaching staff but the negotiations focused on determining and reconciling differing points of view prior to taking particular courses of action.

Luke's essential predisposition to resolving policy issues was clearly reflected in his general views about making decisions and taking into consideration the probable consequences of those decisions:

> I think there's value in respecting individual opinions, but I think what everybody has to be--and you see it in theory, but I hope it's the background I'm coming from. If there are common interests and common goals, I think that's the important thing. I think a diversity [of opinions can be positive]. (Luke, p. 34)

His own decision-making style reflected his fundamental beliefs about the desirability of securing diverse opinions from those who were most closely affected by the decision. Consulting with others was viewed as necessary, but not in all instances. As Luke said,

> I like to confer, I like to involve the people that are going to be affected. At the same time, [it's] situational, I guess, because it really depends on the situation that you're looking at. Some things don't need consultation; in fact, they're more of a pain in the ass if you do consult. (Luke, p. 34)

However, Luke recognized there was a need to improve his own decision style to better take into account the consequences of particular decisions which he made.

> I think the other aspect of it--and this is where I've really had to work on it--is the consequences of your decisions. I'm getting better at that, but I sometimes don't think far enough down the road or think of all of the different situations that are being impacted. (Luke, p. 34)

Consequences of policy decisions were singularly important, particularly when long-term fiscal and human resources, educational benefits accruing from various decision alternatives, time necessary to implement decisions, and long term impacts of the decision upon parents, the community, the staff, and, most importantly, the students were at issue. In all of these areas, Luke relied for guidance on his own value base as a consideration in making decisions. This value base was inextricably linked to the organization's mission statement and other beliefs:

> I think that's why it's important that you have a mission statement, because I think that's where your values are portrayed, and I think also your organizational beliefs, because obviously if it's not congruent with those things, then I think the decision's easy. (Luke, p. 35)

Leonard

In a manner much like Luke, Leonard expressed a fundamental view that the school system existed to provide the best possible services to students. In making decisions in all areas, including the policy area, Leonard was frustrated because alternative courses of action were invariably distilled to one prime consideration--the availability of money:

> I think that it all boils down to money and that you have to be able to operate within your budgets and so on. We've got one school here that's got over 400 kids, and we don't have a vice-principal, we don't have a counselor in it, a K to Four school. Even though we've got that in our three year plan and we talk about it and we do

> things, we still haven't implemented that. We still haven't been able, because of finances, to put that into place here. So that's kind of a conflict. (Leonard, p. 21)

While Leonard expressed concern over this issue, he was also challenged by it since it forced him to explore all other options to reduce the gap between reality and the ideal being sought. By increasing flexibility for other administrators in the system and encouraging the use of discretion, the use of finite resources could be directed to areas which were most important in the education of students. As he stated,

> if you feel that that's really important, you bend, but you're going to have to reduce your field trips, or supplies, or capital equipment, or some from each of those areas. That can be a conflict in terms of dollars, but if you look at maybe some innovative ways to make it more flexible for people closest to the scene and have them involved in those decisions, then you might come out all right. (Leonard, pp. 21-22)

In a key policy area, that of adopting a results-based orientation in the system, Leonard was very clear about the necessity for relating results to the systematic planning process. Essentially, Leonard viewed his task as one which centred on establishing direction, since it was impossible to measure results if the system was not aware of where it was going:

> As far as results, the three-year planning process, they didn't have a planning process here [before I came], and going through a three-year planning process and implementing that clearly outlined for trustees what the priorities were in different areas and helped them to understand what was important in terms of policy, in terms of administrative action, finance, buildings, you name it. (Leonard, p. 12)

The process used in developing the three-year plan and the yearly objectives for the school system emphasized the importance of broadly-based involvement of educational stakeholders. However, the process also reflected the view that the primary responsibility for the plan resided with the Board and the administrative team:

> We [developed] that through retreats at the beginning of each year, and we still do with our trustees, so it's done from the administrative level. Teachers have an opportunity to have input into that three-year plan, and then in terms of the Board looking at it and going through it, they add different items that are priorities to them in each of the areas, so that in that sense it's very much a cooperative type of planning document that we use. (Leonard, p. 12)

The policy process, along with budget development, and the development of priorities were governed by some fundamental beliefs about education. These beliefs were articulated by the Board and the superintendent:

> The Board is extremely concerned that classes are kept to a reasonable size, that teachers are able to work within those classrooms, and that the public here, too, views schools as being manageable. I think we're consistent in terms that we want our schools to have good discipline, that school should be a safe place for kids to go to school, that there shouldn't be fighting, so the discipline is fairly clear in terms of standards, and that makes it a better place for teachers to teach and kids to go to school and feel comfortable. (Leonard, p. 15)

A major policy question in the district was the reorganization of the district schools which meant a different grade structure would be implemented in each school. The perennial dialectic between process and substance was evident in the actions Leonard took. His emphasis on communication was critically important in the resolution of the issue. Extensive consultation with the public, characterized by frank and open discussion of the positive and negative aspects of the various alternatives, a slow but purposeful progression to the desired end, and a final public hearing before the Board made the final decision were key strategic initiatives. Just as importantly, Leonard indicated he did not lose sight of the substance behind the issue:

> You have to be sincere and open, but you also have to push in order to make things happen, and if you clearly see that there are certain things that are going to make it a lot better, then you have to do that, and you don't apologize too much for it. (Leonard, p. 18)

In policy matters, as in all other areas, Leonard was conscious of taking the opinions of others into consideration as well as assessing the rightness of the timing for resolving an issue:

> I think you have to be really careful in your important issues that are controversial and so on, that you get input, that you listen to people affected before those decisions are made. I think where you run into trouble is where you decide something and you go ahead and do it without getting input, without taking the time to do those things. (Leonard, pp. 37-38)

He was also very clear that in the process of securing input from those affected by crucial issues, the appearance of going through the motions or "playing games" must not be conveyed to others. Sincerity was very important to Leonard:

> I think you have to be sincere. I think you have to say, even in that situation where I was convinced that was the best way to go, but that didn't mean that we would necessarily go. I've been convinced certain directions are right, but if your people aren't ready to move on it, maybe you have to wait a year. (Leonard, p. 38)

Notwithstanding Leonard's feelings about the importance of demonstrating sincerity to others in critical issues, he also believed other criteria had to be met for successful change to occur: Not only did he have to be convinced of a particular direction and have others believe that sincerity has been demonstrated, he also believed the rightness of the timing and readiness of individuals to accept the changes had to be considered. Leonard spoke of these issues and how they would affect future actions he would take:

> [If the time is not right], yes. In terms of reorganizing the schools, as far as I was concerned, that was the only way to go. But if we'd gone through all these meetings and done all these things, if there was just a real strong disagreement with what we were doing, I would have been prepared to back off, but that would have been back off for now. [But], next year, guess what? We'll go back and we'll do it again, and if that wasn't successful, we will do it again the third year. So it's not a matter of those things being--if they're really important, it's going to happen, as far as I am concerned. The question might be when [and not if], and I'm able to live with the when in terms of that, but I know that it will happen. (Leonard, p. 37)

The development of the discipline policy for the school system reflected concerns for appropriate timing and for the active involvement of others in its development and implementation. However, one other crucial consideration guided Leonard's actions: A fundamental belief in the worth and dignity of children and how they should be treated by adults occupying a position of authority. While the discipline policy came about because of the inappropriate use of discretion in disciplining students, Leonard felt policies in his system were developed primarily to facilitate the use of discretion by others:

> Yes, I think they're more that way [i.e., facilitate the use of discretion]. They're guidelines for action rather than being prescriptive. I think by having them that way you get more the discretion from people, although probably our student behavior guidelines are fairly prescriptive in terms of identifying problems and alternative actions and so on, so I can't say that in all cases they're general; they can be fairly specific too. And it says very clearly in it that corporal punishment is not used in this district. (Leonard, p. 53)

However, Leonard qualified this view, and believed some prescription was necessary, particularly in ensuring students were well-served and protected from the actions of others:

> There are some things where you're not going to leave any loopholes, and others where discretion can certainly be used by people. But I think it just depends on the particular situation. I can't think of anything where we've outlined a policy saying, "Thou shalt not do this"; we just don't operate that way. (Leonard, p. 54)

Two other quotations not only characterized Leonard's views of policy development and implementation, but also his views of superintending in general. In the first quotation, Leonard chose to emphasize his positive views of the world and those in it:

> The focus is on positive; being proactive; making things happen; how do we move things along? If we've got a problem, how can we resolve it to make the situation that much better? So that's the kind of focus. (Leonard, p. 55)

The beliefs in the fundamental worth of people and the necessity for demonstrating empathic behaviour in regard to their concerns were paramount in the second excerpt:

> Yes, [it is important to demonstrate empathy and understanding for others], and you have to make sure that you don't [do the opposite]--it's very easy in the scheme of being busy and doing all those things that you could say that that's insignificant, but to that person it's not, and you have to watch that. (Leonard, p. 58)

Henry

Like the two previous superintendents, Henry walked a careful line between process and substance in the development and implementation of policies for his school system. By way of substance, Henry accentuated the importance of the district's mission statement and the development of annual priorities in determining actions to be taken, including those in the policy field. By way of process, Henry ensured those affected by decisions were involved in providing input in the decision process. However, and unlike the previous two superintendents, Henry indicated that final decisions were made by the superintendent and the Board primarily because the self-interest of the teaching force tended to take precedence over the fiscal realities faced by the district and the provision of services to children:

> Certainly there was discussion and picking and choosing. I involved the principals in identifying priorities for what we are now in, the 1992-93 school term. That was way back in the spring. They had suggestions; not all of them wound up on the paper. [Deciding what not to include was done] on the basis of, finally, what I considered most important and what the Board considered most important. You have to delete some. They wanted to give an awful lot of emphasis to providing additional support structures to teachers who are getting increasingly heavy loads.

> Teachers are under more and more expectations; there's more and more work for them. The principals certainly saw a need to provide more support. (Henry, p. 12)

The self-interest of the teachers tended to cloud subsequent actions and Henry made this abundantly clear:

> There's a continual outcry [to reduce pupil-teacher ratios], and [we] just wind up saying, "No, the teacher-pupil ratio cannot fall, because they're in 75% of the budget. I'm sorry. You're going to have to have an overall PTR of close to 18. And I'm sorry. Yes, some of them are special-needs kids. Yes, it does increase your teaching load, makes it harder for you, but it's not getting any easier for anybody else, either." So that's the way it was. Then at budget time, the crunch came, and the word came down, "That's all you're going to get for staff. We're holding the staff [to] last year['s] levels." (Henry, pp. 12-13)

During Henry's tenure in the school district, a major portion of his time was devoted to the development of policy for the system. His view of the importance of policy was captured in the following statement:

> As [the] Policy Handbook gets more and more complete, fewer and fewer decisions have to be made because [the] system is supposed to be policy driven in the first place, so that's one reason for [me having to make] fewer and fewer decisions. (Henry, p. 34)

Policy conflicts in Henry's district arose primarily because of self-interest, again demonstrated by teachers:

> [Policy disputes have arisen], primarily with the ATA. As the years have gone by and our focus has sharpened onto what is in the best interests of kids, [the ATA policy representative] is violently opposed to that. His orientation is what is in the best interests of teachers. So we have had many a conflict. (Henry, p. 40)

Henry also emphasized the role of the Board in resolving policy disputes and the degree of support which he received from the Board in those instances. The stance Henry adopted in policy discussions focused on the District's obligation to provide quality service to its clients--the students. Policy decisions were invariably assessed for rightness on the basis of "it's got to be what's best for kids; that's the long and the short of it" (Henry, p. 43). In addition, the real world in which the district functioned had to be taken into consideration:

> [Policy decisions must be made] within the constraints of the real world, I guess. That's certainly finances. We can't put a one-on-one teacher-pupil ratio. The real world, the things you can change and the things you can't change. I guess that's what keeps you sane--the recognition of what you can change and what you can't. (Henry, pp. 41-42)

James

James, like all the superintendents in this section, took the view that student achievement and the services provided to students must be the focal point for any policy development in the school system. These points of view were not without cost for James, as he related in his discussions about revising the entrance age policy. However, he stated the ends and means of developing policy in this area, as in all other areas, could not be separated and the necessity for taking a strong position on student service had to guide the process:

> [Ends and means] are intricately tied together, and when we looked at where we wanted to be down the road in terms of an overall improvement strategy, we were seeing that these were fundamental things that were getting in the road of where we wanted to be. So we wanted to change them, and that's why the change of entry; that's why we focused very strongly on the continuous moving of the child through in more of a continuous flow. We stood out on that and we took a pretty strong position. (James, p. 12)

Three other policy issues James described provided significant clues as to his fundamental values and beliefs. The development of a teacher evaluation policy reflected the importance of enhanced delivery of services to students. However, the teacher evaluation policy itself was based on the notions of empowering staff through enhanced self-assessment and professional development activities oriented to individual teacher needs. In the second policy issue, that of a policy on controversial issues, policy was developed through a broadly-based professional, community, and political representation on the Policy Advisory Committee. James hoped that the policy developed by this committee would represent community standards and remove individual biases from influencing decisions administrators would make when dealing with controversial issues.

The third policy issue, a student evaluation policy for the district, saw extensive involvement of administrators and teachers in the development process. Involvement of the administrators in the policy development was seen as critical and representative of an environment for decision-making which James sought to create in the school system:

> I want to have a trusting environment to the point where--so that if a person has a responsibility for a decision and makes it, that I can trust them with that, and if

> they've made a mistake, not to crucify or that, to let people live with their mistakes. The [second] is to work largely by consensus. Not everyone will agree, even at our administrative level, but everyone needs to have the opportunity to feel that their position is heard and feel that even in a decision that didn't go a particular way, fairly comfortable to say, "I had my opportunity." (James, p. 32)

The process used in developing the student evaluation policy showed the degree of faith James placed in professionals to make professional decisions:

> We sat down, went through it again, and what we have there is basically I'd say more their ideas than mine in the sense that they're in the school, and if they felt strongly about something when we were talking about percentage of marks for participation, we'd discuss it and come to consensus. (James, p. 33)

James felt secure and comfortable with the policy draft and the effects of its eventual implementation because of the involvement of the school principals: "I knew [I was comfortable] because in the student-evaluation policy, the principals are ultimately responsible for the administration [of the policy] and the evaluation within their schools" (James, p. 33). In addition, James felt certain matters affecting the district as a whole had been included in the policy:

> They knew that what was required in this policy was a system consistency, although we had an elementary principal in with the junior and senior high principals. Some things are different. So we acknowledged that some things would be different, but they knew as a given that it wasn't going to be a policy for this school and another policy for another. It seems no matter what we do, I'm very much at ease at that kind of thing. If principals can defend something that they feel strongly about, chances are they're right. (James, p. 33)

One final consideration must be mentioned in regard to James' views of policy development and implementation, although this view, too, is highly reflective of his views on decision-making in general:

> I suppose one of the things in the back of my mind in the decision-making process is always to try and have as much of the big picture as one possibly can, and that includes your values, spiritual values, belief systems, so that in the end, in making a decision, whether it's my decision directly or some information to a principal who has to make a decision who has asked, "What do you think?", I like to see the win-win. (James, p. 37)

John

John viewed policy in the general context of an agreement where he strove to bring people together to take a consensually developed course of action. He recognized that the process of planning and, by extension, the policy process, were replete with multiple interests and multiple demands:

> We've got different roles and different expectations. So, there are some natural conflicts that are there. So, you start to bring this together. To a large extent, I've often described my job as one of building agreements. Consensus is part of it but you have to have the agreement and the agreement level varies according to the group that you're looking at. (John, p. 10)

At the Board level, John felt that the social justification for a policy direction came from the essential nature of the democratic process itself. Indeed, he viewed his job, as Chief Executive Officer, as implementing the policies of the Board:

> I think in terms of my job, if you look at the superintendent as the CEO, implementing the policies of the Board, then the justification for an action generally comes from the fact that you've got a Board that says this is the right thing to do. You've got a policy, a policy that represents the public will and in public education we are essentially implementing the public will and we do it through the electoral process where we get trustees who develop policies. The policies, the goals for the schools, the objectives, the priorities, all of these come through our school Board. It's done, I think, in a collaborative sense. We involve members of staff in the schools through our school principals. We involve the community through various communications with advisory groups and so forth. But, in the end, it's the Board that sets the policies which they think is the right thing to do. So, the goals are set in that way. (John, p. 3)

Consensually and collaboratively developed policies, representing the public will, and sanctioned by the Board comprised the essence of the policy process for John. Because of John's faith in the democratic process, he viewed policies approved by the Board as "right". Those value judgments associated with the content of policy, its developmental process, and subsequent implementation, reflected the belief that since trustees were elected by the public to represent them, the will of the trustees was itself representative:

> The value judgment comes from the democratic process. Each trustee will bring a different set of values. Each of them will be receiving input from different people in the community with different values and really, I guess, in a public setting, it's a social justification, essentially, of the goals. And, that's, I think, what the essence of democracy is that there are these things that are justified in that way. So that would be doing the right thing. (John, p. 4)

He expanded on this view:

> We've got a Policy Handbook here that has a whole bunch of agreements. Every single policy is an agreement. The School Board has made an agreement that will

> be the policy direction that we will work on. And, that's by simple majority. Majority rules. (John, p. 10)

John also articulated a fundamental belief in the necessity for balancing the individual rights with the communitarian good in the policy process. As he said,

> I think that the two have to work together where you don't let one individual action work to the detriment of the general welfare and then, on the other hand, the general welfare shouldn't work to the detriment of the individual. (John, p. 5)

John's views of the policy development process were highly similar to those he expressed abut decision-making in general. He viewed top-down decision-making in a negative manner. Similarly, the policy development process had to take into account the multiple interests of others such that an agreement could be reached for courses of action to be taken:

> I think you will find that the literature, more and more, is starting to illustrate that the autocratic, giving solutions, top-down system really doesn't work. But, that's probably more reflective of the style I've always had and I don't think that I'm called upon to do that more now than before. I think we were called to do that before. (John, p. 13)

At times, however, John was faced with the problem of disagreeing with a policy direction established by the Board. Although this general theme has been discussed in another section of this chapter, the statements John made are nonetheless instructive, since the statement outlined his fundamental values about approaching and resolving conflicts at the Board level:

> Ultimately, I'm of the view that if I don't agree with the action of the Board, then I better work as hard as I can to change it and if I can't change it, then I better start looking for another job. I better not stay around here because first of all, loyalty is a very important part of the operation. You have to be loyal. It's required I think, from a moral point of view and certainly from a legal point of view. . . . The employer can expect loyalty from an employee. If you can't change it, and you can't be loyal to it, then you better go someplace else! (John, p. 15)

John was thus compelled, for reasons of loyalty, to support the decisions made by the Board in policy matters and, indeed, in all other matters.

John also recognized that as superintendent, he did not have the expertise nor the moral authority to arbitrarily write policies for Board approval without involving others in the process:

> I remember early when I started in writing policies back as a deputy superintendent, reading some article about policy writing and saying, "You know, you tell me what the problems are, and I'll know what to find solutions for." In getting agreements, you've got to make sure you get all of those problems out. You've got to get them all out, and once you get them out, then you start searching for solutions, and you'll start to find agreements on these solutions, too. (John, pp. 21-22)

Thus, process was equally as important as the substance in developing and implementing policy since the agreement and support of those who were affected by the policies could not be obtained unless they were part of the process and had a say in determining the final substance of the policy. John's discussion of the process used to develop the principal and teacher evaluation policies reflected his fundamental beliefs in the necessity of involving those groups in the respective policies. However, he went further, particularly in regard to the teacher evaluation policy, in stressing accountability as the purpose of the policy as opposed to the popularly held purpose of improvement of instruction. On this point he was adamant:

> We said, "No way! We are here to ensure a high standard of service, and that's why we're evaluating. The task is to acquire and evaluate information regarding the service by personnel so that decisions regarding personnel may be based on accurate and current information, and may support a high standard of service. That's why we're doing it." Well, that scared people half to death. They withdrew from the notion, so there's a lot of conflict. The ATA said, "The school principal shall not evaluate," and ours is quite clear here: "The principals shall." So we overcame all of these things, we built the agreements, and then the school principals threw in. In the end, I suppose, they respected the authority that I had and they said, "Yes, we'll do it because we have to do it." (John, p. 34)

John's leadership in the policy development process required that he possess the ability and willingness to determine the differing views of multiple groups. After analyzing these differing views, he determined a course of action representing something which both reconciled the multiple interests and went above those interests. This philosophical orientation was very important to John, but he also felt the philosophical had to be tempered by the pragmatic--what was going to work in these times and places:

> I think it's got to be sorting it all out and identifying the goals, identifying the mission, and making sure that those goals way out in front of you are really clear. When you go ahead and do something, you make sure that you understand that this is a goal that you're working towards, and you get people to buy into it. (John, p. 34)

Finally, as the story of the teacher evaluation policy showed, John also had deeply held principles which had to be reflected in the policy outcomes. For him, some things were too important to abrogate to the collective wisdom of multiple interest groups.

George

Early in the interview George established a point of view in regard to policy positions adopted by the Board. Noting the Alberta School Boards Association had adopted a policy position advocating no public financial support for private schools, George knew his Board felt compelled to support such a position. However, he chose to advocate a broader point of view which emphasized parents' right to choose the form of schooling to which their children were entitled at public expense. For George, policy issues had at least two sides, and he sought to inform his Board of the interests inherent in each:

> In looking at my role and talking to trustees, and coming back to the issue of private schools, I try to say to them, "There are two sides to this question: The ASBA has one bias, the provincial government has another. But, at least, be aware." I suppose that's bringing my values and what I think I am and my role is, I think, to make them better trustees, to make them well-educated representatives of the educational community so that when they go talking about issues, they are aware that most of them have two sides. (George, p. 3)

George often hearkened to the necessity for consultation and collaboration to achieve common direction and commitment to change from those most affected by the changes. He attempted, with the best of intentions, to make a unilateral change to the format of the policy handbook but teachers objected since the alternative format would have seen policies placed on a computer disk, readily susceptible to change. Teachers wanted "hard copies" of the policies. In addition, teachers labeled the move a top-down, central office strategy not necessarily consistent with the stated philosophy of consultation and collaboration.

George's views on policy were based on his beliefs about delegating authority and responsibility to others and trusting them to accomplish tasks without undue interference. Beyond these beliefs, George also advocated that a strong sense of caring for others be reflected in policies and in actions taken as a result of policy implementation. However, George also emphasized the role of logic and rationality in determining those courses of action:

> I think the first step is the knowledge, what are we talking about? Let's first of all agree. We're talking about changing our [one of our programs]. Let's first of all understand what the changes involve, and to that end, there's a 30 page paper wandering around this place that says this is carefully thought out. What's there is sound. So I first of all focus on the issue. Let's understand. (George, p. 32)

Consistent with his views on involving others in decision-making, George recognized the desirability of involving others in the policy process as well to achieve a more balanced view of the "facts":

> Oh, I'd love to say facts. Good facts and bad facts and in-between facts. Gray facts. I try to stick with facts. I'm not dumb enough to think that my fact is not another person's fiction or fantasy or whatever. (George, p. 34)

However, George also provided more information about what he considered when making decisions--integrity. Although he re-emphasized the roles of logic and facts, he was quick to highlight integrity and a strong desire to do what was best for students:

> Good God! I only think logically. My facts are not necessarily somebody else's. I like to think there's some integrity about this, a wholeness about that sense of integrity that if it's good for kids, that's probably a pretty good test. If someone can come in and say, "But, this is good for kids", I don't have any problem with that. I get a little bit concerned about the kids. If a teacher comes in and comes through [the curriculum] area somehow or another and says, "I'd like to do things differently", I'd try to facilitate. (George, pp. 34-35)

George placed significant emphasis on the importance of trust between the superintendent and the Board throughout his interview. In a similar vein, he felt this trust had to be modeled to others in the system, through the policy system for example, so that policies could be facilitative and emphasize the use of discretion rather than being directive and coercive. George had two criteria for determining if policy was needed:

> Do we need it? That's the first thing. If it isn't broke, don't fix it. God, that book is 600 pages too thick. I don't know how to get out of it! And the second thing, I suppose, is does this free someone to do something? Does it really put someone in a strait-jacket? (George, p. 36)

When asked if he attempted to balance the ability to exercise discretion with the regulatory aspects of policy, George noted he "would lean very much in favor of discretion. Maybe give the guy enough rope to hang himself" (George p. 37).

Thomas

Thomas articulated some fundamental beliefs very early in his interview which tended to be reflected in both the process and substance of policy development, content, and implementation. The first belief related to a definition of professional success:

> I guess the ultimate success for me in my professional life would be that every staff member that I work with, at some point in time, is confident and is happy and feels success in what they're doing and is given the freedom to expand to the point that they feel they want to, that they're able to. (Thomas, p. 11)

This view reflected a belief in system enhancement and capacity-building rather than in regulation and direction. Second, Thomas pointed to the mission statement as the driving force behind all actions taken and decisions made by individuals in the system. While Thomas viewed the mission statement as a long term goal for the system, he also saw its greatest impact was in shaping a focus for others and himself.

Thomas described a critical policy incident which arose in one of the district schools over reporting student achievement. Thomas believed staff in the school had made a decision reflecting only educational concerns. In addition, parents were not involved in developing the reporting procedure and felt their interests had not been recognized. A conflict soon developed between the parents and the school staff and the conflict was based on the view, expressed by parents, that "damn it, we're not getting any response from this school and the administration" (Thomas, p. 30). Acting as a facilitator rather than a mediator, Thomas became part of a process which sought extensive input from staff, parents, and administrators on the most desirable reporting procedure which met both professional and lay concerns. While the time used in the process was somewhat extensive (over a year), Thomas felt significant benefits accrued to all parties during the process:

> What came out of it was parents' understanding that evaluation is not the report card, that evaluation is a much broader thing. It involves a whole lot more things than just the report card, and that was probably the most single issue that came to

> light that made people understand and say, "Yes, you're right. We do have opportunity to meet with the teachers at any point during the year outside of scheduled parent-teacher interview times. We now know how teachers do assessment." They never really saw it in that fashion before. (Thomas, pp. 30-31)

Thomas emphasized fact, logic, and rationality in making all decisions. However, and after further questioning, Thomas spoke of another major consideration in the decision process, especially in regard to policy content:

> When we develop policy here, questions that are asked by our Policy Committee when we're recommending, we're always taking into account the Catholic perspective? What's right? How is it going to impact on people? (Thomas, p. 48)

In this regard, and unlike many superintendents who worked in the public school system, Thomas felt the self-interest of others, particularly teachers, was not a consideration in the development and implementation of policy in his system. The overall concept of morality, based on strong religious convictions, influenced others and was modeled by administrators and policy makers in the system:

> You know, I could probably count on three fingers of one hand the teachers that I've been exposed to in this system that might fit that category [i.e., teachers wanting what is best for teachers as opposed to wanting what is best for students], but I would say that the majority of the group that I've been fortunate enough to work with here, first and foremost, it's kids. (Thomas, p. 48)

Peter

Peter outlined some fundamental beliefs and prejudices guiding his perceptions of the policy process. Early in the interview, Peter expressed frustration and some degree of outrage over the degree to which others did not live up to expectations and chose to place their self-interests over those of the students they were to serve. While this comment was mentioned in another theme, Peter spoke forcefully of his own mission which was reflected in his actions, even in the policy context: "My objectives still revolve around what we can do for kids. I think if I ever lose that, I've got to get the hell out of this business" (Peter, p. 12). The financial situation his district faced was a major constraint in achieving this best for students, but Peter chose to view it as a challenge to make changes in the manner in which instruction was delivered to students. In this regard however, expectations which had build over a long period of time acted as another constraint which had to be overcome:

"I think in education, we've made certain things sacrosanct" (Peter, p. 12). The sanctity of these expectations was made manifest in the self-interest of others, who were demanding greater involvement and input in the decision-making and policy initiatives in the school district.

Peter did not view this increased involvement as a negative--indeed, the input obtained from others served to increase understanding of the different positions advocated by different groups in the school system. The policy process reflected both pragmatic and principled points of view:

> Now we have parents, we have staff, both the certificated and non-certificated, as well as administrators, trustees, myself, and Secretary-Treasurer sit on a Policy Development Committee, and lots of input there. Support-staff members enjoy being able to have direct input into policy. Lots of them, they agree with their regular staff members, but there are some that they have a personal interest in. (Peter, p. 38)

The policy committee structure was used to develop all policies. The structure had particular benefits for the jurisdiction and for specific interest groups:

> We find it very effective because the discussions become far reaching, but the people who sit there get a real feel for the culture, and they get to hear me talk lots of times and they say, "Oh, that's why they've done that" or, "That's why they developed that policy." (Peter, p. 38)

Thus, involving others in the policy process assisted in understanding the different positions of the various interest groups within the school jurisdiction. However, the input process did not equate to decision-making since this was reserved by the Board and the administrators. Peter cited an example of a policy the teaching staff wanted the Board to adopt.

The proposed policy was to increase teacher preparation time to 150 minutes per week. Peter explained how the Board reacted to proposed policy changes, not only from interest groups in general, but the teacher group in particular:

> When we send something to the Board, the Board may--and in 99% of the cases does--accept it the way it comes, because they have representation on the Policy Committee as well, but in some cases the Board said, "No, we see it a little bit differently. Maybe we should rework it" or, "This is the way we're going to end up." Like the one policy the staff never did agree to, and that's called prep time. They wanted 150 or 200 minutes a week, or whatever, and I just said, "Sorry, we

> can't do it." So we ended up with a policy that they have never really accepted and, of course, periodically bring it back as part of their collective agreement. But I don't anticipate, especially now in today's time, that it's going to change all that terribly much. I promised them that we will attempt to meet a 120 minutes a week, and until you hear from me, that's what we were going to be staffing on. Now, other staffs get more than that, but some staffs get less than that, but I said that's what we're going to work on. (Peter, p. 41)

However, in specific areas, such as those involving personnel changes, Peter was much more pragmatic and, perhaps, more skeptical:

> [Involving others in] decision-making, and there I said to the staff, "You can understand sometimes, then, why we can't have everybody involved in making decisions when it comes to personnel changes, because everybody looks at their own job." Like I said, I would do the same. It's from my perspective, and what's good for me is what I'm going to vote for. I'm quite pleased; I guess I have enough respect going for me that people have kind of accepted what I've said. (Peter, pp. 39-40)

Peter spoke of three other fundamental values which guided his actions in policy and in all other areas. The first related to the degree of trust which the Board and others placed in his judgment and recommendations. As he stated,

> I guess I've been around long enough that people have said, "Well, I guess his record is pretty good. This is not the first year he's done it." I guess they figure, "Well, he's been around for a while," so I guess that's where experience kind of comes in handy. (Peter, p. 48)

Notwithstanding his credibility and the trust shown by others in his judgment, Peter felt he was still obligated to speak strongly on behalf of students and the tenets of Catholic education when the Board was making decisions: "I've taken them to task sometimes. I've said, 'Hey, you guys, you don't treat each other right. This is a Catholic organization. We should be treating others in a Christ-like manner'" (Peter, p. 48).

The second belief and which, to a certain degree, was reflected in the first, was Peter's emphasis on the tenets of religious faith. Policy development and implementation were based on essential views of decision-making: "Most often, [decisions are based] on what I believe is best for kids in Catholic education, and that's a principle I hold very dearly" (Peter, p. 54). He also felt he must use "Christ-like values or Christian values, Gospel values" (Peter, p. 54) in decisions he made although this latter consideration was done literally without conscious thought "because it's just there automatically" (Peter, p. 54).

The third belief reflected a concern for logic and rationality in analyzing situations which required action. Peter indicated he relied heavily on the input from others to acquire as much information about an issue and to determine "where he or she is coming from" (Peter, p. 54). Once this was done, Peter indicated he

> tr[ies] to balance that against my experience, what else has happened, and certainly, of course, bringing into, almost like a filter, the School Act or other legislation or legal aspects. Of course, our Policy Handbook is also more or less like a legal document. Then, trying to make a decision from there. (Peter, p. 53)

The Interpretive Context

The opportunity for these superintendents to provide directive leadership through the policy process and policy content certainly existed. However, the superintendents chose not to use policy in a directive fashion and chose, rather, to use policy as a vehicle to enhance and build the capacity of others to exercise discretion in making decisions at the point where decisions could most effectively be made. One superintendent specifically viewed policy as means to enhance the value that teachers placed on their work, enabling them to contribute to worthwhile purposes, and creating a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work. For this individual, success of others was enhanced through policies which created an overall culture in the system, emphasizing a sense of purpose transcending self-interest. Another superintendent commented that the implementation of a new policy profoundly impacting the delivery of education was characterized not by the top-down directive model, but, rather, by having those most affected develop the implementation strategy.

These superintendents, all of whom were expected to play an integral part of the policy process through their involvement on policy committees of their boards and in the resolution of policy issues (e.g., the teacher evaluation policy, the principal evaluation policy, the student evaluation policy), modeled a moral tone for the school system and reinforced its purposes. As in all other areas, but especially in decision-making, the actions of the superintendent could not be viewed in the context of a "one-man show". The involvement of others was critical for these superintendents for reasons both pragmatic and principled.

These superintendents knew the constraints of time, expertise, knowledge of all situations, and the demands for the involvement of others in making decisions about policy which directly affected them precluded overly large impacts being made by the superintendent on policy development and implementation. Invariably, the mission statement for the school system became the focal point for policy discussions, subsuming, to a certain extent, the views of individual superintendents. Unfortunately, some superintendents spoke of the predominance of self-interests over the purposes of the school system. In these instances, there was less sharing and consensus on policy issues and their resolution and more direction consistent with system beliefs and concern for the "bottom line" benefits to students and financial viability of the system. Generally, however, the shared values embodied in the mission statement for the system were used to guide policy discussions. These values were used to generate greater personal commitment from others to the resolution of the issue and to increase empathy and understanding for the positions of others.

The importance of the overarching goals and values of the school system, which also reflected the values and goals of the superintendents, cannot be understated. It was these values and goals which defined what was to be offered to students and the broad processes used to deliver those services. When policy conflicts arose, it was these goals which shaped the process of issue resolution in the school systems. The mission statements emphasized the importance of developing students' abilities and capacities to the fullest extent possible. However, these superintendents recognized the unique contributions that teachers, parents, the Board, and the community could make in ensuring this occurred. Thus, these superintendents were quick to resort to processes inferred in the mission statement and involved others in the resolution of issues in general, and, for the purposes of this analysis, some policy conflicts in particular.

Changes which could be achieved through the development and implementation of policy were questioned to determine if, first of all, policy was needed to provide necessary guidance and change. Just as importantly, policies were always viewed in the context of the mission statement for the system. By inference, it is conjectured that unless the policy helped to better achieve the broad goals of the system, changes in organizational structure, operations, and basic "rules" would not occur. As one superintendent noted, a prime consideration or the development of policy was, "Do we need it? If it isn't broke, don't fix it" (George, p. 36)! A further consideration applied: Policy changes had to be viewed in terms of the long term benefits which could accrue to the school system and to its clients. All of the superintendents described major policy changes which were seen and believed to improve significantly the services provided to students. These major policy changes were not achieved without significant cost for the superintendents involved although to a person, they fought strongly for the policies since the policies were related to student opportunity.

Timing of policy changes was also critical for these superintendents since they realized the success of policy initiatives depended upon the circumstances in their systems and the willingness of others to commit to the initiative. This is not to say, however, that policy was governed by opportunism. On the contrary, the superintendent had to determine the values and interests of others to determine if initiatives stood a very good chance of being implemented. Empathy for the values and positions of others was seen to be essential in identifying, promoting, and defending policy positions. This empathy, perhaps even in those cases where self-interest was expressed, was translated into actions, goals, and objectives reinforcing shared values. Also in this context, the superintendent had to know when to "push" and when to "let things ride". Conveying a sense of urgency was desirable but not at the expense of all other aspects of the system.

In many cases, desired policy initiatives could not be undertaken because of shortage of funds in the budget. Surprisingly, most superintendents chose to view this limitation as a challenge rather than a constraint, and they actively sought other ways to achieve what was deemed to be most important. It was in this area that the belief in others to offer suggestions and input became most evident. This view was consistent with the view expressed by superintendents that policy should serve to enhance and build the capacity of others in the system. By involving others directly in suggesting policy alternatives and alternative ways to achieve a specific policy initiative enjoying the commitment of others, the superintendents could achieve success. Notwithstanding the expressed belief that policy should serve to enhance and capacity-build, some superintendents felt there were some things which were too important to leave to the discretion of others. As one superintendent noted, "There are some things where you're not going to leave any loopholes, and others where discretion can certainly be used by people" (Leonard, p. 54). What those areas are is a subject of interpretation, but the areas they identified dealt with legal requirements, appeals of process, student discipline, and financial management which is subject to external audit.

Finally, the policy process was governed by the same values expressed by the superintendents in every theme in this chapter. It must be assumed that the values of integrity, fairness, empathy, trust, credibility, interdependence, the worth and dignity of others, a sense of purpose, and honesty pervaded the policy process.

Summary

Superintendents showed considerable concern for both process and substance in the development and implementation of policy. Imbedded in these concerns for process and substance were fundamental beliefs and values which included:

1. An overarching sense of purpose which was to provide the students in the system with the best possible education. This sense of purpose was used to defuse incidents in which self-interests of others seemed to become paramount at the expense of

those who were to be served. This sense of purpose was reflected in the mission statement for the school system.

2. Trust and credibility. Superintendents relied extensively on the trust and credibility which they had build up over a period of time to convince both the Board and others of the desirability for particular policy actions. Those superintendents involved in the Catholic systems related this trust and credibility to their own religious beliefs and the modeling of those beliefs in the actions they took.

3. Facilitative and system enhancing policy as opposed to directive and regulatory policy. Superintendents chose to view their positions as facilitating the actions of others in pursuit of system goals and mission. A number of superintendents indicated a strong desire to facilitate the use of discretion through policy so that those closest to the decisions which had to be made through policy could make those decisions.

4. A strong desire to involve others in the development and implementation of policy. Superintendents discussed a formalized policy process which involved the Board or a committee of the Board, interested or affected parties, and the superintendent. This formalized process existed for reasons which were both pragmatic and principled. In regard to the former, these superintendents felt it was advantageous to have others provide their perspectives on issues before actions were taken. This facilitated understanding and empathy for other positions. Secondly, those who were involved in drafting and implementing policy felt greater commitment to its tenets on implementation.

In regard to reasons of principle, these superintendents viewed the policy process as an avenue to emphasize the fundamental nature of their school systems and the view that school systems existed to serve the best interests of students. However, all recognized the opportunity for advancement of self-interest existed in the policy development process although the degree to which self-interest was expressed varied considerably from system to system and from public to separate.

The superintendents, by virtue of their position, were expected to provide leadership in the policy area primarily by working with the Policy Committee of the Board. It is in this vital area that beliefs became paramount for the guidance provided depended not only on logic, rationality, and analytical skills, but also on the purposes of the education system, understanding of and empathy for the positions of others, and, in the case of the Catholic superintendents, basic religious principles including caring, compassion, and Christianity. Finally, it is in the area of leadership that the superintendents demonstrated values-driven leadership--leadership consistent with who they are and what they believe.

Theme Six: Management and Leadership of the Superintendent

Introduction

Superintendents occupy the highest position within the local education hierarchy. However, the literature has shown that the appearance of a significant amount of power and authority accruing to the position is complemented by an equally distressing trend for local trustees, community groups, and professional groups to attach significant blame to the superintendency for things which go wrong and for general dissatisfaction with the overall course of events occurring within the system. Are they "lightning rods" for discontent? Despite the demands for significant time commitments to do the job and the impact of these commitments on other aspects of their lives, do they continue to like what they do? If so, why? Perhaps a more fundamental question which needs to be asked is why they do the job they do?

Luke

Luke believed a willingness to learn new things was absolutely important for him as it allowed for the exploration and implementation of alternatives to the traditional delivery paradigms for educational services. He viewed bringing people together in an environment where they could interact with a minimum of conflict, focusing on providing students with the best possible education, as his greatest accomplishment in the superintendency. In this context, Luke viewed the strategic planning process as highly desirable and necessary since the agreements reached resulted in the commitment of educational stakeholders to the higher purposes of the system. Thus, self-interest became secondary to serving others.

Luke expressed a strong belief in the necessity for planning, on a yearly basis, so that priorities could be shaped for the school system. In this context, he experienced some degree of frustration in securing the cooperation of the Board since the Board did not attach the same importance to planning. Reactionary resolution of issues rather than long-term planning tended to detract, in Luke's opinion, from system effectiveness since there was not an established consensus as to what was to be done. While Luke viewed the absence of systematic, annual planning by the Board as somewhat undesirable, it also provided him and other members of the administrative team with the opportunity to pursue directions according to what they believed were the right things to do. In exercising this discretionary authority, Luke was governed by the philosophy of trying to do the best possible things for students. This philosophical orientation was also used in reconciling the differing interests of teachers, particularly in regard to contractual negotiations, with those of the school system. The adoption and implementation of the principles of Total Quality Management were viewed as essential in modeling the belief that the student is the customer of the educational system.

Luke adopted a more facilitative, consultative, and bottom-up style of decision-making since he believed that, in most instances, those affected most by decisions should have significant input in making those decisions. Inherent in this approach was the belief that those making the decisions had to be trusted to do the right things and that the right things would be done without excessive direction from the superintendent's office. While Luke advocated at the Board level for increased involvement of others in decision-making and action planning, he was prepared to intervene should things go wrong.

Leonard

Leonard believed modeling was very important for a superintendent, for through this modeling, he demonstrated a commitment to both private excellence and public duty.

Noting he sought to be the best he could be in his personal and professional life, he attempted to achieve this "best" through cooperative actions and well-developed methods of communication. Through the processes used in restructuring the school system and in devising communication programs, both formal and informal, Leonard felt that this modeling function was being met. In addition, because Leonard felt a strong sense of responsibility for what happened in the school system, this "bottom-line" responsibility had to be met through supportive and facilitative actions in which the exercise of discretion and autonomy were paramount. After recounting a story in which his career and personal aspirations were dealt a blow, Leonard articulated a belief that if commitments are made, then those commitments must be met.

Leonard emphatically stated that his prime belief in providing the best services to students within the constraints encountered was a commitment he sought to meet in concrete, definitive ways. In this regard, numerous initiatives were undertaken in his school system. However, the success of these initiatives was always attributed to a "we" as opposed to a "me" orientation and actions taken were based on a collective, interdependent notion, rather than on an individual basis. While Leonard felt a strong sense of ownership and pride in the accomplishments of the school system, he sought to promote this feeling of pride in all of the educational stakeholders in the jurisdiction. Modeling his belief in the primacy of services to children was clearly evidenced in the selection process for a teaching position.

In the following except from his story, Leonard commented on his views of the importance of selecting only those teachers who he believed were the best available:

> Spending a great deal of time making sure that you get the very best person available to teach creates an example, even though it's something you fundamentally believe in, because those people are going to be with you for a long time. They're going to impact a lot of kids with their teachers. But it also shows to them and to others that it's really important that you do things well and that you spend time on your belief that people are really important in your system, so you select carefully. If people are creating problems within the organization, you get rid of them quickly but with concern for human dignity, but you don't keep people that are creating problems either. The only way you have a good system is that you keep building and you keep developing it.

> I know in one situation where we were looking for a science teacher, a chemistry teacher, that we had gone through the process of interviewing extensively. We started out with reference checks and so on. We got it down to two people who were really top-notch as far as we could see, and they'd gone through our in-depth interview, and we checked references out and so on. We just couldn't decide on which one. The principal was involved with me in terms of that. So what we did is, we had them teach a lesson. (Leonard, pp. 60-61)

By having prospective staff members teach a lesson, Leonard was, in effect, teaching his staff a lesson about his beliefs in both the importance of teaching and the importance of providing quality services to students. In addition, Leonard reaffirmed the value of human dignity in his actions. The story continued:

> It came down to that, so we set up a lesson and a class, and they each taught a lesson for us, a 40 minute lesson, and then we were able to make the decision on that. Now, some people in the system said, "That's absolutely ridiculous that you would do something like that," and I just said, "It's too important not to", and I think that really impacted a lot of people. They felt very badly for these people who were put through this, because that was kind of unheard-of. (Leonard, p. 60-61)

The lesson taught to the entire teaching staff was that

> [it showed them] we do care who we get, we do care who we select, and we are going to go to any means to make sure we get the best person [to ensure that our expectations for excellence, strengths and how they deal with people and students are met]. (Leonard, p. 62)

Henry

Henry expressed a strong desire to serve children and others. He described himself as a "doer" (Henry, p. 9) who "walked the image of the cowboy" (Henry, p. 9), and maintained a high degree of resolve to accomplish highly difficult tasks. The resolve, however, was tempered by a high degree of patience and a "love for people" (Henry, p. 9), reflected in the relationships he maintained with others.

Henry, a self-described highly competitive individual who sought to achieve his personal best in the superintendency, stated he liked to win, but winning was not accomplished at all costs since the fundamental values he acquired in his religious upbringing caused him to maintain a focus on the feelings of others. The drive to have a positive impact upon others through service was a dominant theme in Henry's conversation. Not only did this prompt him to become a teacher and to seek a senior administrative position in the local educational hierarchy, it also prompted him to offer service within the community in which he lived. "Leaving the woodpile a little higher than he found it" (Henry, p. 5) was a saying which appropriately described his point of view on this area.

Henry recognized a sense of mission was not only very important for himself as he carried out his duties, but also for the school district, since this mission represented a drive toward perfection. Recognizing perfection was unattainable did not stop Henry from attempting to attain it not only in his own practice, but also in the services provided to children in the District's schools. In this sense, mission, both of a personal and a system nature, provided the basis of decision-making in the areas of policy development and implementation, student programming, staffing, budgeting, and evaluation. The superintendency allowed Henry the position and influence to do things, to be the "cowboy", to instill a sense of mission for serving others, and to strive for a degree of perfection in this service.

Henry addressed the issue of the importance of education and his role in ensuring that the importance was conveyed to others. However, conveying the importance of education caused Henry to experience some conflict in his personal life: His spending long hours at his desk affected his family life. However, he was not prepared to leave his office at a "normal" time since the superintendency "dominates and takes over your whole life" (Henry, p. 6). When Henry chose between staying late to be in schools during the day, over avoiding the schools to complete his office work and get home at a reasonable time, he elected to do the former. The rationale for the choice was simple: "You can't be sitting here going through your in-basket during the day. If you did that, you should have your head examined. You can be more effective by being out in the schools, interacting with principals, visiting classrooms, communicating with trustees" (Henry, p. 7).

However, the in-basket work still had to be done so it was done in the evening. As Henry said, "[While the in-basket ranks in priority towards the bottom], if you haven't got it done for the next morning, you're in trouble" (Henry, p. 7). Maximizing influence was far more important to Henry than taking care of routine matters during the day. For Henry, "being incarcerated in the office was not smart" (Henry, p. 7).

The conscious decision to work the long hours was based on priority use of time: Knowing that his influence could best be exercised during the school day through formal and informal contacts with principals, teachers, and trustees, Henry completed his paperwork in the evenings, thus sacrificing time with his family. This desire to serve may have also stemmed from his image of himself as a "doer" or as a "cowboy", one who does not shirk responsibilities.

Notwithstanding of the importance of Henry's and the District's mission, at times, the interests of others tended to be advanced at the expense of the clients to be served. Henry specifically noted that teachers often demanded increased support systems as they carried out their own professional roles. Often those interests could not be met since, in Henry's estimation, they did not have greater importance than the children to be served. Henry was also highly conscious of the bottom-line in budgeting in attempting to balance the interests of the teaching staff against those of the school district. He noted that if he was to be unable to maximize the use of fiscal resources, the Board would probably find another superintendent who could.

Henry also noted as superintendent, he must be proactive in the communication process since he was uncertain that appropriate messages, particularly those about the rationale for decisions of a budgetary nature, were being given by field administrators to both the staff and the public. Controlling the communication process through the Board office was tenuous at best, prompting Henry to adopt his proactive stance in discussing with staff and the public the decisions made by the central administration and the Board. Control, in this sense, was restricted to advancing his own views and attempting to influence others.

James

James expressed a strong desire to win--a competitiveness--and the superintendency provided him with this opportunity to win in serving others: "Winning isn't the only thing, it's everything" (James, p. 5). Both personally and professionally, James was motivated by a strong desire for improvement--finding new ways of doing things better. He felt this attitude helped him in his professional life as it motivated him to move beyond satisfaction with the status quo.

James also noted that one of his primary tasks was to formulate and articulate a vision for the school system. As an educational leader, he was able to do this. James worked extremely hard to get others to share the vision for the school district so that the vision was owned by others rather than being espoused only by the superintendent. In this sense, James perceived that he was criticized for advocating his vision to the extent that he did not listen to the concerns of others. He argued however, that the mission and vision had to be "held out there" (James, p. 8) for all to see to guide actions taken to ensure that high standards of student achievement and quality of education were achieved.

Although James worked extremely hard to take steps to achieve his vision and to make improvements, he was highly conscious of the necessity to take care of the mundane, "administrivial" aspects of the superintendency relating to the day-to-day operation of the school system. Feeling obligated to demonstrate efficient practices in the operation of the school system, James developed and implemented a comprehensive system to follow-up on decisions made at regular Board meetings. Tasks were assigned to various individuals and times established for the completion of those tasks. In addition, James felt that decisions should be made by those closest to the decision. This relieved him of the burden of making unnecessary decisions and allowed him to maintain a focus on the vision and to ensure the administrivia did not get in the way of the "bigger things we want to do" (James, p. 7).

To a very large extent, James defined success by the degree to which others were touched by both his personal vision and that of the school system and then adopted these visions as their own. Shared visioning was to be accomplished through two processes: (a) sustaining the vision by supporting others in their attempts to achieve it; and (b) developing a systematic plan based on a broad view of the educational system in which all parts were highly interrelated. In these processes, James viewed himself as the orchestrator, establishing direction through a careful analysis of where the system was at any point in time and developing consensus as to where the system wanted to be. As he stated, "I see my job as having a role in knowing where we are and, in a sense, helping people to see where in fact it is that they are going" (James, p. 4). With regard to the latter task, James was strongly influenced by the literature dealing with the future and the skills, knowledge and attitudes which today's students would need in order to be successful in this future.

John

John discussed, very early in his interview, the importance of building agreements in his school system. In the political sense, this agreement building process represented the pulling together of the diverse threads of interests in the system to weave these threads into a cloth which represented a finished product which was more than a momentary affectation with fashion. Both process and substance were important for John as these agreements were built:

> I think success was making agreements, and when I make an agreement I feel good; when I'm searching for it I feel bad. Where we're scrambling, we're scrapping, we're parrying, we're debating, we're weighing, we're discussing--all of that is unsettling. When you get it all together and you tie up the agreement, whether it's a small one individually, or a big one, whatever it is, certainly at that point in time you feel good. There's a bit of a high that you get out of it. (John, p. 19)

Not surprisingly, John viewed success as building these agreements:

> Success is a value and being successful to me means finding solutions to problems. When we're dealing with problems, it means designing systems that will work. It means implementing systems that will work. It means doing the job right. Doing the right things right. (John, p. 3)

These shared agreements were sought in matters as diverse as setting directions for the school system, evaluation of personnel, developing policies, and the resolution of conflicts.

While pragmatism was very evident in this comment, John also indicated more was at stake:

> I think it's got to be sorting it all out and identifying the goals, identifying the mission, and making sure that those goals way out in front of you are really clear. When you go ahead and do something, you make sure that you understand that this is a goal that you're working towards, and you get people to buy into it. (John, p. 34)

Another comment also indicated John's importance in using principles to make decisions: "I think being principled is the basis to work from in the end. It really bothers me to hear people make a decision only because it will work, it's the easy way out" (John, p. 37).

John recognized the need to adapt to changing times, situations, and needs and, as superintendent, he could not rest on his past achievements in the hope these would carry him through. As he stated, "You're always going to be looking to the future in terms of objectives that are there and the objectives are going to be changing" (John, p. 9).

Rationality was important in assessing the need as John exercised leadership. However, assessing the needs and planning to address them took into account the multiplicity of roles and expectations of different people interacting with and affected by the school system. Again, John stressed the importance of building agreements, bringing the different views together so that consensus could occur. Conflict in this process was not resolve by compromise, for John took a very dim view of compromise as a tool for conflict resolution: "If that's the end, if you stop at compromise, forget it. You've got to take it to the full area where you agree and say, 'This may not be what I wanted in total, but I agree this is the best we can possibly do given all of our circumstances'" (John, p. 14).

At the Board level, John felt he must demonstrate loyalty to Board decisions and that if he did not agree with a Board decisions, he commented, "Then I better work as hard as I can to change it and if I can't change it, then I better start looking for another job. Loyalty is an important part of the operation" (John, p. 15).

John's basic administrative style was consultative in nature. As he stated, "We've always used the collaborative team-work approach, but you spend more time in it now because there are more people who want to have their say, and less people were willing to have their say in those days. I don't resent it. I think it's important" (John, p. 22). Leadership by direction, in the old sense of top-down, autocratic decisions-making by the superintendent, was not viewed as desirable or workable. John preferred leadership which was based on the values of "collaborative decision-making, team-work, shared decision-making. It's rather curious to me that people are starting to talk about shared decision-making today as though it were something new and its something that we've been doing here all along" (John, p. 26).

These values were also evident in actions taken to reduce expenditures in the school system. As John stated, "The justification comes out of the fact that it's necessary, that you've sought other alternatives, and you didn't set out with the intent of maintaining the current level of service to students" (John, p. 25). Process and substance were critical determiners of John's actions and true to his value of involving others and building agreements as to courses of actions, the budget was reduced: "We built that agreement. The agreement was that you can expect less, people; you had a choice to make, so you're part of this too. It wasn't done without your involvement in the decision" (John, p. 26). Inherent in the decision process were the values of fairness--in this sense, fairness was treating all the same--and social justification--the action was absolutely necessary given the fiscal circumstances faced by the school system.

In relation to assessing the degree to which the priorities influenced principals in developing their own objectives, John commented, "You know, it's really remarkable how these School Board priorities influence us" (John, p. 30). The elements were also reflected in the process and substance of principal evaluations in the school system. Both the principal and the school developed annual action plans which were based on system priorities and objectives. By monitoring the principal's course during the year, corrections could be made to ensure both process and results were appropriate. As John stated, "We've built a team that's going in the same direction, and it's seen to be fair" (John,

p. 29).

In a similar vein, the teacher evaluation process reflected values-driven leadership: "We are here to ensure a high standard of service, and that's why we're evaluating [teachers]. The task is to acquire and evaluate information regarding the service by personnel so that decisions regarding personnel may be based on accurate and current information and [support] a high standard of service" (John, p. 34).

George

In discussions about priorities and objectives, George was very clear that there were priorities for the school system and for himself associated with being the superintendent of schools. With regard to the former, George placed greater emphasis on the importance of strategic planning than he did on the mission statement for the school jurisdiction. While he viewed the identification of the mission statement as a political process, the development and implementation of plans consistent with the mission statement was the job of the superintendent. In this context, George believed his job was to facilitate the teaching and learning process and he tended to be more action oriented than philosophical.

George believed results could be best obtained by establishing firm expectations for others and by carefully selecting those with whom he worked in an administrative capacity. While George recognized the pursuit of perfection was desirable, he also recognized it was impossible to achieve: "I just expect perfection [and] obviously, we never reach it" (George, p. 11). Striving for the best was something which George both advocated and modeled. While George had a vision for what was best, he constantly sought the opinions of and input from others in making decisions about actions which would help to achieve this "best". For George, seeking feedback from others rather than directing the change was very important. Supportive behaviors and empathy for the effect potential changes would have on individuals also characterized George's actions in dealing with others. A reflective practice perspective had shown George that "cogitating" with himself was an inappropriate method of determining options and solutions to problems. As he stated, "I'd rather have you tell me" (John, p. 12) was a belief he regularly relied on as he carried out his duties.

George's strong views of the superintendent as educator led him to exercise directive and values driven leadership in the context of his dealings with the Board. Direction was provided by offering alternative points of view, from an educator's perspective, even if those points of view were different from the commonly held political point of view of the trustees. Politically astute, George sought to influence not only incumbent trustees, but also those running for office by providing them with information representing the goals, objectives, mission, and financial affairs of the system. Certainly not all of George's efforts in this area were altruistic--he also had to look after himself given his rule that he would never be fired again. His statement, "Maybe that's part of the bluff" (George, p. 5) applied well to his situation. In other words, he wished to create an impression of openness, sincerity, and trust in the minds of the political leaders about both the system and himself.

Since George placed a high value on relationships, and keeping matters on issues rather than on the personalities involved, George worked diligently with the Board to provide direction on issues resolution, although he was uncertain as to the motivations for his actions: "My motives are again suspect because I don't know if I'm of the opinion that if trustees fight with each other, sooner or later I become the battleground so it's in my interest to go out and do what I can to get them to understand each other" (George, p. 6). His qualification of this statement later in his story provided more clues as to George's leadership style with the Board: "I do work at having harmony in the personalities so that they can talk about the issues and understand each other" (George, p. 7).

George's views on leadership and management were made very clear in his discussions about the effect the new fiscal realities would have on education. He was somewhat fearful of the increased control which could be placed on school systems by the province if cutbacks had to occur. In order to better address this issue before measures were imposed on the system, George sought to communicate extensively with the teachers, making them aware of the potential for cuts and their impact. However, George also recognized the reality faced by his school system over the amount of money spent in maintaining lower pupil-teacher ratios. As George stated, "If there's any discretionary spending, it's in there. Right now, we're being told [there's not enough kids in front of a teacher], and I suppose that in another year, there will be more" (George, p. 13).

Controlling expenditures by reducing staffing levels was to be a major challenge for George but he thought that dealing with this challenge could be accomplished more easily by emphasizing what the purposes of the school system were, establishing clear objectives and priorities, and maintaining a focus that the system existed to provide students with the best possible education.

Thomas

For Thomas, success was determined through services to children and through providing opportunities to others to be successful in what they did. As he said,

> I guess success in my professional place, would be to have every kid that we touch in this school system achieve to the ultimate ability that child is able to. I guess the ultimate successes for me in my professional life would be that every staff member that I work with at some point in time is confident and is happy and feels success in what they're doing and is given the freedom to expand, to achieving those successes to the point that they feel they want to, that they're able to. That to me would be our ultimate success, and I guess that's achieving totally our mission statement, but as I say, I'm not an idealist either. (Thomas, pp. 11-12)

Thomas strove to establish an environment in which the success of others could occur. This environment was characterized "by everybody working together toward the common goal that we share" (Thomas, p. 5).

Thomas exhibited some fundamental leadership values in two significant cases in his story. The first involved the right of non-resident Catholic students to access a Catholic education within his school system. The second involved dealing with teachers who chose not to follow the basic mission and focus of the school system.

In the first instance, Thomas took a political stand because of his moral outrage over the manner in which students and parents who resided in another jurisdiction were being treated by the public system. While he was unable to work directly in the political context, he was able to covertly support the parents by providing them with salient information necessary to make their case to the public system. Ever cautious not to be seen as advocating for the minority only to have his school system viewed as benefiting financially from the potential formation of four-by-four separate districts which would seek amalgamation with his district, Thomas, nonetheless, felt a strong responsibility to "help those people realize their dream to have the right to educate their kids in a Catholic school system" (Thomas, p. 13).

While neither Thomas nor any of his trustees attended meeting at which the topic was discussed, the people were told, "We would go to the extent that we would supply them with any information they needed but I said, 'Any guidance or leadership, I'm sorry, but I just have to back off'" (Thomas, p. 15). In assessing the actions taken, Thomas commented,

> I felt that what I was doing was right, and it wasn't done in isolation either. Everything that went on or that was unfolding I shared with our trustees to get a sense of where they might be in this whole thing, how they might feel, for instance, if these satellite districts were to request or petition this Board to amalgamate, because that group needed to know that as well. So although there was no formal motion passed, I asked our Board at a meeting last fall, "If these Boards were to form and if they were to seek amalgamation, could I get some sense of your feeling as to whether or not you would entertain amalgamation in those areas?" and, to a person, they agreed unanimously. (Thomas, p. 22)

Justification for the actions taken and Thomas' leadership in those actions were expressed very simply: "It was based upon the right to Catholic education as opposed to resolving our financial difficulties by promoting them to form as a tax grab" (Thomas, p. 27).

The second case involved teachers who were attempting to exclude students from taking classes because of perceived academic deficiencies. Taking the direct approach with the Board, Thomas apprised trustees of the difficulties and sought their support for actions, even if termination was involved and despite potential political fallout. Process concerns were also shown in the manner Thomas chose to deal with the staff. Rather than confronting individuals, Thomas sought consensus from the school staff on the importance of the mission for the school system and how that mission should be put into operation. Thomas supported the school administration in the meeting:

> The bottom line was, my concluding statement to that group was, I took a copy of our mission statement and I identified two people on that staff who really, I thought, had difficulty buying into our mission, and that was their problem. They were concerned about educating only the brightest and best kids, and they saw that administration was giving them a tough time because they were saying, "Kids have a right to fail," and if a kid wants to challenge a course and he's had the prerequisite to that course, he or she has a right to fail. (Thomas, p. 35)

Thomas confronted the school staff with school district expectations and suggested some individuals had some very fundamental choices to make:

> I took the mission statement and went to this meeting and I said, "I've come to the conclusion that we're varying personalities, but there are differing beliefs that we each have," and I said, "You must understand one thing: You're teaching in the [this school system] and you people developed this. Every one of you sat in meetings, and you developed what is stated on that document," and I held it up. I said, "I have no ownership in this, but when I came here I had to buy into it. I had a choice," and I held it up. I'm looking at two particular individuals, and they knew what was going on, and I said, "You know, my preference would be that you made that similar choice, [but], if you can't buy in, then you opt out rather than me making that decision for you." I said, "I prefer to operate that way. It's cleaner; it's less traumatic for anybody. Let's deal with it in that way."
>
> I had two people take me up on the offer. They came in and they resigned, and they said, "We can't buy into the--" and I said, "I respect you for being up front and honest with me." We parted friends. There was no difficulty with it whatsoever. They left, I got a call back from one later on, and they thanked me because I helped this individual get a job in a setting that I figured would be most appropriate for them, and it was in a purely academic challenge program. (Thomas, p. 36)

In taking the stand he did, Thomas gave a significant message to teachers: The school system existed to serve students and teachers did not have the right to deny, in any way, shape, or form service to those students. He also demonstrated concern for process in both the discussions and the outcome, holding teachers themselves responsible for their actions as opposed to imposing a solution which could have been attacked.

Peter

Peter believed that he became a superintendent because he could potentially affect more people by directly affecting those who provided the services to children. Acknowledging that "we have a tremendous responsibility when we work with our young"

(Peter, p. 19), Peter's own efforts in planning, budgeting, modeling, setting goals and priorities for the school system, designing and building facilities, policy development, cultural integration, recognition of differences, and religious instruction and the practice of the Catholic faith in the schools revolved around this fundamental belief. Committed to a service orientation, Peter felt that if he should ever lose the desire to serve children to the best degree possible, then he "should get the hell out [of this business] (Peter, p. 33)!"

Peter, like all other superintendents, demonstrated directive, political, and values-driven leadership. Not surprisingly, the values-driven leadership stemmed from his views of the superintendency outlined in the preceding paragraphs. In addition, Peter, unlike the other Catholic superintendents, frequently mentioned the importance of the Catholic faith and its basic tenets in determining what he did and said in exercising values-driven leadership. Much of this emphasis was discussed in the first theme of this analysis. However, the degree of morality which Peter demonstrated in this leadership component was substantially different from that of others and it deserves further mention. Peter's belief in the three C's of Catholic education (Caring, Compassion, and Christianity) heavily influenced him in both leading and managing the school system.

This was not to say, however, that Peter was not influenced by other more secular concerns, primarily those of a fiscal, societal, political, and a personnel nature, as he sought to provide what he believed "is best for kids in Catholic education" (Peter, p. 54). In a fiscal sense, Peter felt that "we don't believe the resources are available for us to be able to [offer services] as well as we would like to; plus, the impact of the breakup of the family has had a profound effect on education" (Peter, p. 6). These constraints caused him to focus on those things which were most important in his Catholic education system. In this light, as mentioned in a pervious section, his signposts for decisions were not to degrade the dignity of an individual, not to harm a child's chances of being successful, to use objective facts available, and to account for biases of the decision-maker.

Directive, political, and values-driven leadership were evidenced in Peter's approach to his Board. As he stated, "I want the Board members to know where I'm coming from, and I will often just simply say, 'We do things differently in Catholic education' because usually, when new Board members come in, they've got kind of a business slant to things" (Peter, p. 47). In addition, Peter offered other advice he gave to the Board: "You know, in Catholic education, sometimes we don't do things that make the most business sense. When you're doing it for children, sometimes you've just got to do it" (Peter, p. 47).

In a manner much like George, Peter felt he was able to exercise such leadership with the Board because he was trusted and viewed as credible. This allowed him to take a stand with this Board over the matter of staffing when a trustee suggested Peter did not appropriately handle a teacher's request for a mutual release from contract. As he stated,

> that was a real conflict, and finally toward the end of that conversation I said, "I think you're missing the point here. I am responsible for staffing. Quite frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn what you think." He said, "I was wondering when you were going to get to that." [I told him this] because I was getting annoyed. (Peter, p. 51)

Peter effectively demonstrated aspects of his leadership style in dealing with a number of personnel issues. In all instances, Peter was able to provide a message to the individual concerned and to others about expectations for performance, how people should be treated, and how important the Catholic nature of the system was in making decisions. One case however was somewhat different since Peter felt outraged over the manner in which the individual, who was a principal, treated a child and a teacher through inappropriately using discretion. Given his comment, "That's where I would set the standard [for the use of discretion] as being much more rigorous for a principal and even more rigorous for a superintendent" (Peter, p. 30), the feelings of antipathy for the individual can be understood but, in light of his comments about the three C's of Catholic education, the antipathy is somewhat surprising as well.

The Interpretive Context

All superintendents, because of their position in the educational hierarchy, have significant power to shape and determine organizational goals, develop and implement policies, allocate resources, engage and reassign staff, and distribute information such that particular ends are met. However, the ways in which power is used, in these instances, is testimony to the leadership and management styles of the individual occupying that position. In addition, the degree to which the superintendent establishes and maintains relationships with others in the organization may represent a medium of exchange, a form of power, to be used by either party, in seeking ends. The manner in which self-interest is viewed--as an aberration or as a fact of organizational life--will determine, to a large extent, the behaviour of the superintendent or, for that manner, any individual who occupies a senior management or leadership position.

The superintendents in this study recognized they could respond in one of two ways: By making unilateral and directive decisions, in concert with appropriate policies developed by the Board, in as many areas as possible, such that control of the educational enterprise was rigid, oriented toward compliance and rule-following; or by recognizing authority in the educational enterprise was fragmented and beyond rigid control, expertise was dispersed among varying partners in the organization, information necessary to make decisions was not always readily and immediately accessible by the individual dominant in the hierarchy, negotiation will occur to ensure various groups can maximize their access to resources, and that decisions can be made by those closest to the decision who have the relevant expertise, interest, and information. The latter point of view required recognizing that the skills needed in decision-making are developed over time and that mistakes can and will occur.

These superintendents recognized that those involved directly at the delivery level had greater expertise and were closer to the problems and the clients than they were. In this light, they used the expertise of others to identify problems and potential solutions and viewed this not only as desirable, but also as a necessity. However, this necessity was governed by faith--faith held by the superintendent in the abilities of others to make appropriate decisions commensurate with their skills and authority and commensurate with appropriate accountability mechanisms.

In schools which have been characterized as managerially lose but culturally tight, these superintendents recognized that the fragmented nature of the school system required them to be orchestrators, managing the diverse and fragmented interests of others such that they could be directed to accomplish broad organizational goals and much more specific organizational objectives. As the school system has become more diverse and complex, and as authority and responsibilities have become more diverse and incapable of direction from one individual, the superintendents knew they had less ability to affect others through direction and control.

Notwithstanding the limited ability to control and direct in an active fashion, these superintendents had to assume overall responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational organization. By setting, usually in a consultative fashion, the jurisdiction's goals and objectives, these superintendents helped others to achieve high performance in providing service to students and other clients of the education system. However, it is also important to recognize the overall mission or goals of the system were determined, largely, by the times in which they were developed. Thus, they too changed to reflect emerging realities. Changing goals and objectives required flexibility but the overall mission, which served to unite the efforts of others, was still the overriding source of strategic and tactical planning decisions.

The superintendents spoke of the necessity of developing annual objectives and priorities for themselves and the school system as a measure of the progress made; the results orientation in Alberta required this be so. They questioned whether it was appropriate to set objectives for others, knowing full well the very process may set off a chain of reactions based on the self-interests of others which could be counter to the best intentions of the superintendent. Thus, negotiation of the specific objectives became a critical activity such that there was a mutual commitment to the objectives as opposed to compliance with objectives set for schools or personnel in the system. Through this negotiation, consensus and teamwork emerged, flexibility was achieved, and individual initiative recognized. In this manner, strategy was not reduced to a specific formula and the human elements such as morale, leadership, individual knowledge, and the ability to exercise discretion were not only respected, they were viewed as essential components of effectiveness. Hence, these superintendents did not simply develop and analyze strategies. They assisted others in analyzing information and making decisions by managing the overall context in which those decisions are made.

Political leadership for these superintendents was also achieved by negotiating structural or systemic changes within the organization. They recognized the "stakes" for the other parties involved and they recognized secondary effects for those individuals as well. Thus, there was a need for significant information about the values, personalities, and preferences of others. Approaches which maximized support and minimized resistance were sought and, at times, pragmatism, as evidenced though identifying satisfactory solutions (i.e., the best that can be obtained at this time) rather than the best, was as important as principles. However, these superintendents chose to use what was best for students as the maxim for evaluating decisions they and others have made. Negotiated settlements with others tended to model what was to come: Principles were reflected in the negotiated settlements which served as precedents for future problem-solving in similar areas. Conflict was recognized as counterproductive rather than energizing, generally destructive rather than constructive, and led to winners and losers. Again, the maxim for evaluating decisions and negotiated settlements must be stated: Actions taken and decisions made had to reflect what was best for students. On this point, there seemed to be no negotiation for the superintendents.

One aspect of political leadership stressed a highly pragmatic point of view, and the superintendents tried to find things which would work. In this realm, rationality seemed to drive the decision process and efforts were expended to determine opposition to and support for alternatives, the stakeholders in problems, identification of alternatives based on lowest degree of potential conflict, identification of ways to maximize the impact of decisions throughout the organization, and determination of win-win strategies and solutions for those who were most critical to successfully implementing a solution to a problem.

Considerable emphasis was given the process of issue resolution--almost as much as upon the substance of the issues involved. Leadership was determined, to a large extent, by the superintendent's vision, negotiations with multiple parties, adjustments to changing times and circumstances, and the degree to which others could be influenced by their actions and vision. Rationality was one aspect of the leadership dilemma. A truism may be appropriate: If the philosophical orientation, advocating that a mind (or, by extension, people) becomes (become) detrimental when its (their) intellectual capacity surpasses its (their) integrity, reflects a danger when rationality and intellectual analysis are used exclusively in leadership, something else is needed as a balance.

For these superintendents, the political dimension of the school system could not be overlooked but neither could political issues--those which focused on process--overshadow the necessity of substance in the school system--what the system was all about, what it sought to do, and the importance placed on the individuals in that system and those on the outside who interacted with it. Leadership was viewed as mobilizing others to accomplish higher purposes than those attributed to simple self-interest. Consequently, far more was required to have others commit, focus, demonstrate energy, and creativity in the work they do as opposed to ensuring the provision of simple contractual exchanges where people provide a service in return for some extrinsic reward. These superintendents knew that the material and extrinsic needs of employees must be met and that other intrinsic needs, including creativity, exercising initiative and discretion, recognition for work done, problem-solving and decision-making, pride, and accomplishment also had to be met. Leonard made this abundantly clear in his story and others inferred that it was these intrinsic needs which, when met, provided and ensured superior performance and commitment to the work being done. Harnessing the hearts and minds of staff was the task which often fell on the superintendents' shoulders. It is in this area that values most strongly influenced the leadership of the superintendents.

One aspect of this values-driven leadership was addressed in the first theme: The educational system operates much like a family or a community where norms, values, expectations, unwritten rules, and relationships are communicated to others in a developmental fashion. These fundamental beliefs represented the manner in which both the superintendent and others determined problems, devised solutions, and then made decisions. Most importantly, these beliefs revolved around relationships between people and they have a sense of moral character--treating others right because as individuals, they should expect no less. Values exhibited by the superintendent thus influenced the behaviour of others, particularly as others attempted to achieve the mission of the school system.

The superintendent's behaviour set a moral tone for the education system and reinforced its primary aims. Nowhere was this action seen more clearly than in the decisions which the superintendent made or in the decisions which others were encouraged and supported to make. Decisions reflected the basic values of the individual and of the organization, but the superintendent could not make all of the decisions. While the values of the superintendents were reflected in decision-making and in relationships with others, the sheer magnitude of their work and their constrained ability to influence directly and physically all aspects of the educational system required a sense of commitment from others to something which went beyond the superintendent.

The educational system itself and its aims had to engender a sense of loyalty and commitment from others such that the institution itself was worthy of support from others. In effect, this leadership was transformational leadership and values such as trust, integrity, fairness, and respect for the individual were used to develop and improve communication, decision-making, relationships with others, and evaluation of individuals and services provided.

Values articulated and modeled by the superintendent served to attract well qualified teachers, and engendered in others a sense of commitment to and fulfillment in their work, ultimately resulting in improved services. Commitment underpinned the resolution of difficulties and problems which arose in the normal course of events. Developing and maintaining this commitment was predicated upon articulating and inculcating a higher sense of purpose for the education system--what it was all about, what principles guided its operations, and what unique contribution it made to the education of students. Short term objectives resulting from the necessity to resolve immediate problems were often forsaken in light of the higher purposes and long term benefits. What was critical about the fundamental philosophy built on values is the values and mission must be shared. Common purpose was seen to win out over self-interest.

Beliefs reflected an order of preference and importance: The student and the parent were to derive service from the employees and the system, since both exist to do just that. The values in both the mission statement and the education system's operations were defended by these superintendents and rarely was their defense delegated. They watched over, monitored, and used the values and mission statement as the criteria for evaluating success. Consequently, these fundamental values were simply too important to be protected by others. By inference, assigning responsibility to others to do this could have communicated a message to others reflecting a lack of commitment on the part of the superintendents to those very values. Rather, the values were to be emulated, respected, and used by others in their own decision-making and problem-solving.

Values were present in the management and structural characteristics of the school system. In regard to the notion of decentralized decision-making, values were clearly evident. Local initiative was fostered, bureaucratic rule-following was discouraged, and the fair and just treatment of staff and students were expectations for all. The rationale behind such an approach was relatively obvious: If others in the educational enterprise shared the values articulated by the superintendent and as reflected in the mission statement and general objectives for the system, decisions made by others would reflect those values. Further, the self-interest, expressed predominately by one major group in the enterprise--the teachers--may be subsumed or, at least, lessened as they too attempted to serve students in the best possible ways.

This did not mean however, that the values and feelings of groups--even teachers who followed positions based on self-interest--were not respected or viewed with a degree of empathy. It did mean that these values could not be the focal point of the educational system; the system had to serve a higher purpose and this higher purpose had to be communicated by the actions of the superintendents. Again, shared values were critical in assessing progress and determining actions to be taken.

To what extent must the superintendent be visibly seen or have a high profile in this area? For many of the superintendents in this study, it may have been less critical for them to be involved in incidents where significant values issues come to the fore than to have developed the capacity in others to use values similar to those articulated by the superintendent and adopted within the organization. As was pointed out, the superintendents could not be physically present, because of the exigencies of time and circumstance, at all meetings held to discuss problems or to make decisions. Rather, this presence was felt in other ways. Knowing when to be involved in what were seen to be major value issues was more important than being involved in resolving all issues. In either instance, a message was given to others--a message based on the fundamental values of the superintendents and their school systems.

These superintendents established a direction which those in the system chose to follow. The direction was more important than being seen to lead others, in a direct and visible fashion, as they proceeded to accomplish specific ends. Thus, clear statements about what the superintendents wanted for the school system were established, communicated to, and internalized by others who did the day-to-day work in the school system. Second, the superintendents did not espouse these sentiments lightly--they worked extremely hard to see that they were reflected in the organization on an on-going, daily, regular, and systematic basis. They worked extremely hard in their systems, many experiencing personal sacrifice in terms of their own time and family, to ensure things happened. Thus, a tremendous ownership was felt by the superintendents to affect, in the strongest and most positive sense possible, the affairs of the system. Their school system became an extension of themselves and reflected what they believed and held most dear.

Finally, espousing ideals, while necessary, was not necessarily sufficient to ensure they are adopted and used by others as a basis for their own actions. Decisions made and problems solved demonstrated or modeled those fundamental beliefs, values, and ideals. It was in this fashion that integrity was paramount--a wholeness or consistency of what they believed being put into practice. Much like parents must aver the practice in raising children by advising them to "do as I say and not as I do", these superintendents practiced consistent with their beliefs.

Summary

Without exception, all of the superintendents in this study experienced major difficulties in implementing educational change within their school systems. While this has been explored in another theme, it is useful to note that the superintendents who could have responded in a unilateral manner and directed change, albeit with limited success since compliance is significantly different than commitment, chose to recognize the diverse nature of the educational enterprise and actively involved many others in the discussions about the educational change, the ramifications of the change on both the delivery personnel in the system and upon those to whom the service is delivered, and the negotiations to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution to the issue at hand. Further, the attitude held towards making mistakes by those to whom decision-making authority had been devolved was best characterized by trust, faith, honesty, and a lack of fear of repercussions.

Certainly there were tendencies toward the pragmatic and consequentialism in the actions superintendents took, but it can also be said actions reflected a strong value base. One of the most critical components of their values base was the emphasis superintendents placed on providing students with the best education possible. Peter's own views of the matter can be applied globally to the other superintendents in the study. He noted if he should lose the desire to serve children to the best degree possible, then he "should get the hell out of the business" (Peter, p. 20). However, while the depth of feeling in this comment represents commitment to the clients, it did not mean a lack of empathy for those who provided the services. Indeed, Peter again highlighted the views of other superintendents when he indicated to the Board that the preconceived notions of business, bottom-line accounting and evaluation, and the directive approach in effecting change could not be ruthlessly applied to the delivery of education.

Chapter Five

Summary, Reflections and Implications

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the research problem, design, and findings of the study; a discussion of the relationship of the literature to the research findings; personal reflections; and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to derive insights about the decision-making and problem-solving of superintendents and the role their personal and professional values played in each. These insights were obtained through an interpretation of the descriptions and meanings provided by eight superintendents to the researcher through a series of interviews and data analysis.

An interpretive approach using the assumptions and procedures of naturalistic and phenomenological research provided the methodology for the study. In searching for an understanding of the nature and roles of values in superintendent problem-solving and decision-making, the researcher involved eight practicing superintendents in a discussion about their beliefs, philosophies, practices, and the actions which they had taken in the context of their daily work environment.

This study was premised on two basic assumptions. First, it was assumed that educators, regardless of the capacity in which they work, are involved in judging and deciding what ought to be done. In judging and deciding, as Codd (1989) stated, "whether they are determining ends or means, they cannot escape the commitment to values; neither can they ignore the careful appraisal of the facts pertinent to each decision" (p. 160). Bringing these two components together produces the responsibility criterion that is very important in education. Effective and professional educational administration must, therefore, involve responsible deliberation and decision-making based upon educational principles, values, and facts.

Second, it was assumed that values are crucial determinants of effective decision-making and problem-solving behaviours of the superintendent. Educational leadership, as Codd (1989) stated, "entails commitment to a set of educational values and principles for practice. These values and principles do not constitute a body of doctrine or a particular set of beliefs, but rather a disposition towards rational reflection and deliberative action which is fundamentally philosophical in nature" (p. 161). In this context, values therefore become highly significant in determining the desirability of ends and means and become a criterion or a standard for guiding individual actions and thought, for influencing the actions of others, and for judging one's own conduct. Therefore, while the actions taken by superintendents, in and of themselves, are very important, the basis of and for these actions becomes more important than the actions themselves.

In attempting to determine what personal and professional values superintendent espouse, five questions served to guide the study:

1. To what extent do the values held by the superintendents influence the identification and selection of priorities for the school system?

2. How do superintendents provide for the debate and containment of values within the political arena of the organization?

3. How do superintendents resolve, within the administrative process, those value conflicts and value dilemmas that occur in the school system?

4. What, in the minds of superintendents, constitutes good and right administrative action in the context of specific issues and policies?

5. What cooperative actions do superintendents take to realize the attainment of values within the school system?

Other questions were added as the study progressed to allow for exploration to occur.

The study used a naturalistic, phenomenological approach in which the emphasis was placed on deriving meaning(s) from lived experience, borrowing others' experiences and their reflections upon those experiences to arrive at an understanding of the deeper meaning of experience in light of total experience. While a series of questions had been developed to guide the data gathering, flexibility was used during the data gathering to allow for and accommodate the interactive aspects of the interview process.

The purposes of using an interview approach were twofold: (1) The interview provided a means for exploring and gathering experiential material which facilitated the development of a rich and deep understanding of a phenomenon; and (2) the interview served as the basis of a conversational relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee about the meaning of an experience.

Ten superintendents, all of whom were known personally by the researcher, were invited to participate in the study. It was felt that the intensely personal nature of the study and the questions to be asked of the participants required a pre-existing relationship between the participants and the researcher. However, the researcher was extremely careful to ensure that personal knowledge of the participants did not negatively influence or prejudice the interview process. The participants were asked if the prior relationship between researcher and participants was disadvantageous and their responses indicated the relationship facilitated the interviews since the trust factor was very important to them.

Of the ten superintendents who were asked to participate, nine readily agreed and, of these nine, eight were formally involved. An in-depth, tape recorded interview was held with each participant and each interview lasted for two hours, with several taking more time. This interview was the primary data gathering strategy and all interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants. At the conclusion of the interview, the tape recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist and a copy of the transcript was sent to each participant to verify the conversations. For those who requested it, the tape recording itself was duplicated and returned to the participant along with the transcript.

Data analysis began immediately after each interview. Tape recordings were played and replayed in an attempt to draw essential meanings from the conversations. When the transcripts were received by the researcher, they were analyzed to determine themes, categories, and clusters of conversations which were illustrative of the themes. The transcripts were later used to develop a story for each participant. Analyzing the tape recorded data immediately after the interview was extremely helpful in using the transcripts to write an interpretive story for each participant. From all eight stories, six broad themes emerged. Stories were returned to each participant to ensure that the researcher's interpretations were reasonable, accurate, and maintained the principle of anonymity.

The eight superintendents who participated in the study came from a variety of public and Catholic school systems, in both urban and rural environments. Each of the superintendents had completed a master's degree, one had completed a doctoral program, and one had nearly completed doctoral requirements. Their length of tenure varied from five years to over 20 years and the average tenure for all participants was approximately 12 years.

Findings of the Study

The findings were reported under six broad themes:

Personal and professional values. The superintendents reported that the demands of the superintendency had a pronounced effect on their own families. Seven of the eight superintendents noted the family was singularly important in their lives, in both a professional and a personal sense, and, if a choice had to be made between the family and the job, the family would win out. While this was a noble statement, the truth of the matter was singularly different.

Clues were also given as to why family was so important to the superintendents. The role of the superintendency made it difficult for the superintendent to establish deep personal relationships with colleagues. Hence, the family remained the single source of the deep and lasting relationships individuals need. The loneliness felt by those at the top of the local educational hierarchy required a support base be established somewhere else--in the family itself. A second finding about the value of family and the effect of that value upon the practice of superintendents can be seen in the way they cared about, interacted, and collaborated with others in the school system. In much the same manner as a parent is seen to have an obligation to influence children, the superintendent wished to influence the activities in the school district such that appropriate modeling behaviour could be demonstrated to teachers and that they were perceived to be fair, honest, and trustworthy.

Without exception, the superintendents in this study noted the time commitments demanded by the job were such that the family suffered. Despite conscious attempts to limit the all-consuming nature of the superintendency, the superintendents continued to give to the position and to take time from the family. The 60 hour work weeks, the attendance, both mandatory and informal, at numerous meetings, the demands to balance budgets yet simultaneously provide effective and excellent programming, dealing with trustees especially when relationships with one trustee out of seven may not be solid, reconciling diverse political interests, and continually advocating for children in their systems have all caused superintendents significant stress. Yet, they still wished to continue as superintendents despite the toll the job exacted. This motivation may well be traced to their strong sense of personal mission and vision oriented to providing service to students and managing their systems effectively.

The desire to serve carried with it significant personal and professional costs, particularly if widespread political agreements could not be obtained from either the Board or the community over proposed educational change. However, the commitment to the position was not easily abandoned. One superintendent, who was heavily criticized and whose wife had to bear the brunt of these criticisms, and despite his wife's wish that he quit and take a teaching position in a remote area of Alberta, demonstrated commitment to follow through on his initiatives because he believed them to be right for students. The degree of rightness was obviously not felt by the community where he lived and worked.

Perhaps the most important finding in this area is that these superintendents felt they operated from the same value base in both personal and professional settings. They saw themselves as highly integrated in their personal and professional lives, thus providing them with a clear sense of direction not only in terms of what they did, but also in terms of thinking of the effect of those actions on others. None admitted to wearing a "company mask" and a "home mask" in appropriate settings. In this context, sincerity was especially important. Practicing what one believed at home and at work was extremely important in the superintendency.

Directly related to the previous comment is the need the superintendents felt for personal integrity--acting in a manner consistent with personal beliefs and the desired vision for the organization. The notion of "it all depends"--situational imperatives--cannot be said to apply universally to these superintendents, for to have followed this philosophy would have meant a diminution of themselves. One superintendent, however, strongly commented on the need to consider situational imperatives particularly in resolving educational issues within the community. This consideration was not related to expediency or pragmatism, but rather to the application of ideals within particular times and places.

The superintendents were continually confronted with balancing demands for process and substance as they carried out their roles. In this context, but particularly in regard to substance, standing up for what they believed was seen to have dramatic consequences, not all of them pleasant, for the superintendents. In no other area were the consequences of the dialectic between process and substance more apparent than in the amount of stress which the dialectic generated for the superintendents. Because process mattered so much in the resolution of diverse interests (politics), process could win out over the substance, the end of the decision. What became even more critical for the superintendents was serving an elected Board whose members were so convinced of pleasing everyone with both process and substance that both became subverted. The consequences for both institutional and superintendent integrity assumed magnitudes unknown and unappreciated by almost all others, except other superintendents, in the education system.

Increasing politicization, in any endeavour, but especially in education, occurred when process subsumed substance and what the relationships were to accomplish within the organization were viewed as more important than the relationships themselves. At the Board level, the superintendent was consumed with working with trustees, attempting to reach a psychological accommodation wherein damaged relationships would be tolerated because the end sought was important in maintaining consistency with stated organizational goals and values.

However, these superintendents, in order to survive, had to pay due and careful attention to process, particularly in dealings with the Board. Both informal and formal methods were chosen to exercise process. With informal methods, both trustees and others in the system could be guided with a minimum of formal bureaucratic structures and strictures. The informal processes were indicative of values in action, since the informal process paid close attention to the way in which values influenced and affected how people treat each other, make decisions, and solve problems. Formal structures tended to work within bounds established through standard operating procedures--policy and accepted practice within the educational system--and expectations established through rules.

Standard operating procedures could often come into conflict with a simultaneous need to allow others to make decisions in their own environments subject to some situational imperatives indicative of the circumstances. However, standard operating procedures and policy did not address all situations encountered in the daily life of the school system in general. When decisions had to be made and policy could not provide the appropriate guidance for determining actions, discretion was encouraged and facilitated. However, this discretion was guided by something more fundamental: the values held and articulated by the organization in general and by these superintendents in particular. Again, substance and process were closely linked.

However, the danger is that process, particularly at the political level, may win out over substance. Self-interest of the teaching force and other school jurisdictions, clearly illustrated in the stories, was the primary characteristic in areas where process dominated. Notwithstanding these examples, substance was also demonstrated in an attempt to counteract, to varying degrees, the self-serving attributes of process.

The superintendents, in an attempt to inculcate more substance, often increased process, particularly at the Board level, to ensure political information obtained by trustees, could be countered by other political and correct information. While attempting to direct more substance, they were in effect, increasing process through increased checks and balances.

In those areas were process and substance collided, the superintendents determined which issues were most important and they devoted efforts to resolving them. The formal and informal processes in the school system allowed a means by which the superintendents could keep others focused on their own jobs and ameliorate the distractions which could occur over major issues. Again, the behaviour of the superintendents assumed major importance, and contact with others, both formally and informally, served to give messages to others. What became critically important for superintendents when focusing substance was their knowledge of education itself. It was this knowledge which provided for empathy of others' positions and for a commonality of direction, based on shared values. It enabled the superintendents to find out what problems were being encountered and to relate these problems to the knowledge they possessed. Simply being perceived as knowing by others could cause fewer conflicts and less stress since others were reluctant to press their own cases to the limit. Knowledge might also have allowed the superintendents to direct the actions of others, not necessarily a desirable state of affairs, in those cases where directive action was necessary to resolve an issue.

Issues of substance were debated and resolved through a variety of other strategies which included, but were not limited to, working with others in small groups or individually, offering reasons for decisions made, reorganizing when and where necessary, identifying clear responsibilities for others, using the informal and formal structures in the system to enhance communication, providing autonomy to others to make decisions closer to the impact of the decisions, and taking action in those instances where the performance of others was less than adequate. By focusing on substance--concrete, identifiable, important, value-laden, and critical issues--the superintendents did not negate the importance of process but recognized substance was far more important, particularly in sending messages to others about the business of the system and how the services were to be provided.

Focusing on substance required integrity and emphasis on some fundamental values which included ethical standards, belief in the ability and capabilities of others, trust, vision, delegation of authority and responsibility with the concomitant accountability, and a basic belief in the validity of one's own values which underpinned decisions. Despite the fundamental beliefs reflected when emphasizing substance, the superintendents often second- guessed the actions they took. Unfortunately, the questioning often occurred because of the process used in making and implementing the decisions.

The most critical areas faced by the superintendents involved decisions with personal, political, and personnel overtones, especially when the Board was involved. The data have shown that there was no simple prescription to be obtained through interpreting their actions for others to follow in similar circumstances. What did emerge, however, was the careful use of judgment, reflection (though not to the degree expected), often characterized by second-guessing actions and decisions, and a reliance upon experience to serve as a guide. All of these however, were grounded in some fundamental beliefs about what was right and proper, not necessarily just in specific circumstances, but what was right and proper generally. They also determined to what extent more specific processes needed to be put into place to resolve situations. This determination was based on expanding the opportunities for others to more actively participate in the decisions which affected them and upon the necessity for providing services to the clients of the school system. Because they valued simple over complicated processes, substance could be achieved readily with greater commitment.

This was seen in the attitudes the superintendents expressed toward localized decision-making rather than bureaucratic decision-making. Stretching the strengths of individuals was far more important than bureaucratic rule following and applying sanctions when rules were not followed. Communication was fostered through informal rather than formal means since memoranda, over-reliance on reports, and regularized meetings, while necessary for communication, were not necessarily sufficient to deal with issues. These superintendents felt that communication could become stilted, less than candid, emphasize process rather than substance, and encourage conflict rather than its resolution.

In those instances where conflict was inevitable and compromise was the potential solution to resolve the conflict, the superintendents chose to confront the issue rather than compromise on something which was seen to be extremely important. Confrontation and conflict were viewed as necessary aspects of taking new directions which would provide better quality service to the client of the system. Handling the confrontation and conflict revealed significant values of the superintendents.

First, the superintendents demonstrated an absence of a heavy-handed imposition of their own will on others without hearing and listening to the positions of others. While giving orders may have reduced the confrontation, in many instances, giving orders could not and did not represent either a practicable or a principled approach to resolution. In fact, giving orders or directions would have served only to exacerbate the issue since the root causes would not have been resolved. Further, such an approach would not have been reconcilable with the attitudes expressed about maintaining the dignity of others, a concern for the feelings of others, or a concern for empowering others in their own work.

Focusing on issues rather than process meant that issues were far more important than the personalities of the persons involved. The superintendents tended to focus on the issue rather than the personalities of those involved, particularly if those involved were employees, parents, or students. Unfortunately, at the Board level, personalities often became the issue, and a superintendent was caught in the middle of trustees or, more unfortunately, in the argument that the superintendent's personality was the issue. In these cases, fault-finding on the part of trustees became the issue. Outside the formal organization, others often used their political influence to convince trustees that the personality of the superintendent was the issue underpinning actions perceived to be negative for children, teachers, and other stakeholders in the educational enterprise. In these cases, the superintendent was forced to rely on the good will of other trustees who chose not to be swayed by the political machinations of other trustees and political proponents. Indeed, an anomalous situation existed: The superintendents were expected by trustees to focus on issues rather than personalities and to reward and recognize the actions of others; simultaneously, trustees did not, in some cases, demonstrate such behaviour toward the superintendent. Notwithstanding the absence of loyalty demonstrated toward the superintendent, universally, the superintendents expressed a strong loyalty toward their Boards.

The superintendents also expressed a strong desire to have open, frank debate on issues. Decisions stemming from these debates were not determined to be effective based on the philosophy of win-lose. Rather, decisions were assessed on their rightness, primarily as this rightness related to providing enhanced service to students and meeting certain requirements for basic human dignity, organizational mission, and personal self-expression. Winning and losing invariably were equated to personality issues rather than to substantive issues. This same attitude was expressed at the Board table and these superintendents did not view the non-adoption of their recommendations as personal losses to be borne. Rather, the superintendents recognized their obligation to argue passionately, at the Board table, particularly if the issue directly reflected services to children, for their recommendations. "Losing" may have been regarded as differences in judgment and interpretation of facts, based on value prejudices of the trustees, than as a personal loss.

By adopting such a view, and modeling it to others, these superintendents demonstrated the value of open and honest debate to others, the worth of logical arguments substantiated by facts, mutual respect for the opinions and points of view of others, and goodwill of and from others. In addition, this tactic demonstrated that the values and abilities of others were important, as well as the deeply held values of their school systems. These superintendents also chose to present their views and values to others on formal and informal visits. They also obtained the views of others, particularly teachers and parents, before decisions would be made. Open exchange of views and ideas were viewed as extremely important, regardless of the source of the views and venue in which the exchange took place. In may cases, these superintendents chose to exercise their influence in areas where it could do the most good--invariably this meant out of the office.

Honesty was demonstrated to others, particularly in outlining both advantages and disadvantages to particular courses of action. However, this did not mean these superintendents told all at all meetings in an attempt to force consensus. Invariably, dissension, particularly with staff, was handled on a one-on-one basis to serve two purposes: The first purpose was to demonstrate a respect for the opinions of the individual concerned; the second was to continue to advance the fundamental value of a course of action. Consensus was important, as witnessed by building agreements, but not at the expense of basic and fundamental personal and organizational values, direction of the school system, or service to children.

A number of the superintendents in the study spoke of the value of timing as a critical component in issues resolution. As a corollary, patience became very important value in this consideration. This may be akin to the old adage of planting a seed, watering it, nurturing it, and watching it flourish in and of its own accord. Characteristically, the time allowed for issues resolution was increased to allow further debate, to improve the quality of the decision, and to secure a more broadly-based commitment to the decision. Careful during presentations not to appear to have made up their minds before hand, the superintendents spoke of the necessity for being well-planned but simultaneously open to new suggestions from others. Despite their best intentions, people often perceived the superintendents to have made up their minds before hearing from others. Such are the contradictions in this position.

These superintendents also spent time dealing with major issues, encouraging others to deal with issues in the same manner. Characteristically, they valued open and wide debate on the issues so that a broad-based agreement on resolution could occur. Just as importantly, this created and nurtured the environment in which issues could be discussed openly and honestly. In those instances where consensus could not be reached on a critical issue, the superintendents were ready to step in and advance their own solution. When, as one superintendent said, "the buck stops at the superintendent's desk", became the necessary philosophy to follow, all superintendents were prepared to exercise their prerogative to make final decisions, although this rarely occurred.

Not one of the superintendents spoke on the value of compromise as an effective tool for conflict resolution. Indeed, the opposite occurred and one superintendent specifically stated that compromise was an ineffective tool. While compromise could create the impression that there were no winners or losers in a debate, the truth was somewhat different. Unless individuals were committed to one point of view, resentments were maintained and the underground political network was used to further advance a particular political agenda and undermine the compromise decision. Compromise operating under the aegis of consensus was viewed in a highly negative sense. Just as importantly, by adopting a compromise approach, those in the system were left not knowing where the superintendent "was coming from", raising the possibility that similar issues could arise in the future. Thus, compromise reduced the superintendents' credibility and ability to influence the actions of others.

In crucial matters, the goals of the system, as reflected in the jurisdiction's mission statement and the superintendents' vision, become paramount. Consensus reached on these broad goals was seen to be the desirable option. Further, decisions must reflect fairness--respecting the other's point of view and circumstances--rather than concerns relating to simple justice--contractual obligations based on a *quid pro quo* reflected in the view that if individuals do what they are obligated to do, they will be treated in a like manner. Indeed, these superintendents spoke frequently and ardently of the necessity to make fair decisions, based on well-informed judgment, tempered by values of concern for others, honesty, trust, common purpose, respect for others' points of view, and commonly held agreements to proceed with a course of action.

Again, the concept of integrity, so often mentioned in the thematic analysis, emerged as a critical concept in conflict resolution. While these superintendents generally did not wish to have an organization characterized by conflict, they did not, as Thomas stated most eloquently, aver conflict when it did arise. Each was prepared to confront issues of all types, preferably with advance support from the Board. When support was not immediately known, the superintendents proceeded to exercise their discretion based on the perceived degree of trust their Boards placed in them. Trust had been developed over time, and the superintendent did not wear appropriate masks, keeping views hidden from either the Board or other members of the educational organization. Highly committed to their own views, values, and beliefs, these superintendents were not prepared to give conflicting messages to others by not standing for what they had already articulated and demonstrated. Integrity was reflected in not only standing for something, but also ensuring that others knew what it was the superintendent stood for.

All of the foregoing is not to say, however, that the essential value of survival was not a consideration for these superintendents. Indeed, they wondered, and wondered often, with much disquietude, about their continued employment, particularly when the support from the Board was not seen to be adequate or was not seen at all. In these instances, they became increasingly cautious, and spent more time gathering additional information and working with trustees to apprise them of situations and probable courses of action. Invariably, the Board Chairman was the beneficiary of this extra intelligence, but there was no guarantee that other trustees were kept informed by the Chairman. This assumed a lesser degree of importance when the relationship between the superintendent and the Board was characterized by mutual trust, respect, integrity, honesty, open communication, and loyalty. When Boards, for reasons which were usually political and process oriented, took issue with both the process and substance of superintendents' actions, the superintendents were obligated to speak up for themselves, confront the issue, and achieve a degree of resolution. In these instances, superintendents had to demonstrate their own commitment to ethical behaviour and personal integrity, and to attempt to make more certain the uncertain which, if left alone, would result in a paralysis of action or focusing on the easiest way out.

Assessing the rightness of decisions. These superintendents, like all other senior administrators, had prejudices or beliefs about what was good and right and they brought these beliefs and biases to the problems they faced and had to resolve. While all of the school systems had policies in place to guide problem-solving and decision-making, situational demands forced the superintendents to examine not only the policy content and rules which governed some organizational situations, but also their own prejudices--their basic beliefs--since the rules and policies could not possibly govern all situations they encountered. These beliefs provided a guide to superintendents who had a vision for their organization and devised methods or plans to make this vision a reality.

The question to be asked is what makes these prejudices the right ones? The superintendents in this study, without exception, expressed strong religious beliefs which, in and of themselves, should not be considered as totally necessary or sufficient for success in their vocation. However, their religious beliefs, and their concomitant expectations for behaviour, particularly in regard to dealing with others, can be viewed in the context of ethical standards, standards which provided these individuals with a sense of inner direction --a "sensitive moral compass"--to guide them through their daily tasks. These fundamental beliefs were viewed as important in engendering trust and loyalty in others.

What meanings can we draw from the language of these superintendents about their value base, about the assessment of rightness in decisions, and about modeling their beliefs to others? All the superintendents in the study expressed the idea of integrity--a sense of oneness, or being a whole person in their practice. In the responses of these superintendents to matters of choice and making decisions, a sense of rightness was expressed--rightness based on deeply held principles as opposed to simply reacting to the demands of the particular situation in which they found themselves. This is not to say however, that situational and contextual variables were not considered. Indeed, these situational and contextual variables were extremely important since they represented a strong tendency to weigh the effects of decisions on others. Personal traits, based on these deeply held principles, included honesty, trustworthiness, caring, a deeply held sense of mission, and a concomitant vision for the school system.

All of these superintendents had strong religious beliefs yet none of the superintendents advanced the view that the religious underpinnings were, in and of themselves, sufficient to exercise due and careful leadership in their school system. Indeed, one superintendent specifically stated he could not use his religious beliefs as the basis for justifying his actions to others. The non-denominational nature of the public school system precluded this. The religious nature of the Catholic system required it, but more was involved than simply articulating religious beliefs--being a superintendent in a Catholic system meant practicing the Gospel values and the tenets of Christianity.

These superintendents also expressed a strong set of personal and ethical standards --principally those of fairness, caring, and honesty. In a manner strikingly similar to that stated in the interpretive context and summary of the first sub-theme, it is conjectured that these values provided an inner sense of direction, a compass, developed through life experiences and, in many cases, formative upbringing, to guide these superintendents in their administrative work. As George stated, "What would I be if I wasn't stubborn? I'd be so flexible, I wouldn't stand for anything. I don't have much choice. I'm going to stay that way" (George, p. 41).

The practice component of these beliefs was critically important to all of the superintendents. They set examples of the behaviours they wished to see in others, particularly in dealings with students, parents, and teachers. In many cases, the values they held were unconsciously used in evaluating situations and determining courses of action to be taken. As one superintendent commented about his religious values as a base for decision-making, "[It's] another assumption that I wouldn't explain because it's just there automatically" (Peter, p. 57). The use of these values in modeling behaviour and in making decisions did not preclude the use of analytical processes, policy, logic, or rationality.

All of these superintendents expressed an overarching and perhaps compelling vision for the school system which focused on the delivery of services to children. The value of making decisions in the best interests of children was invariably the "bottom line" for assessing options and efficacy of options chosen and implemented. What was best for children was, however, determined by the personal prejudices or beliefs of the superintendents involved; those in this study had remarkably similar prejudices including, but not limited to, superior academic performance, instilling appropriate life skills and beliefs to create a well educated citizenry, treating children differently than adults, and ethical concerns which addressed both the communitarian good and individual rights .

To a very large extent, the personal vision of these superintendents was, as James noted, "held out there" (James, p. 8) for all to see so others would eventually share the same vision. The ultimate goal was to have others develop increased commitment and effort to the cause of educating children. Perhaps the importance of family, addressed in the first section, applied to the organization itself in addition to the personal family of each of the superintendents. Thus, the oneness, usually characterizing families, could be extrapolated to a oneness within the educational organization--in essence, an educational family, pulling together for the mutual benefit of all.

The personal value base of these superintendents and the vision they had, while separate and capable of being examined, appeared to be inextricably linked for the reason that the type of educational system they wanted was simply an expression of the value base they held. By making decisions, turning thoughts into actions, these superintendent could and did affect the system so that the system became progressively more like the one the superintendent envisioned. Rightness of decision-making was thus determined by the type of organization wanted and envisioned.

Beliefs regarding the building of agreements and reconciling differing political interests. Process and substance, the conflict between ends and means faced by these superintendents, required them to come to grips with working directly to get the right answer to a problem and working on the right way to get an answer to a problem. The dichotomy emphasizes the difficulties inherent in answering the what and the how of decisions to be made. While the superintendents and the Board could and did make bureaucratic and hierarchical decisions which affected others, sometimes in a unilateral fashion, there is significant doubt whether decisions made in this way represented the interests of others or took into account the effects of those decisions on other people.

On the other hand, these superintendents assisted others, both formally and informally, in making those decisions by involving them directly in planning, gathering information, and recommending courses of action to be taken. Using such a strategy was as important as the recommendation itself since the strategy involved values such as collaboration, consultation, respect for the values and positions of others, trust, individual freedom, and the common good.

For these superintendents, process represented the manner in which people were brought together to handle problems and to determine courses of action. Process represented the way in which changes were discussed and implemented such that commitment rather than compliance characterized the implementation of changes. That is not to say, however, that these superintendents removed themselves from the decision process to the point where neither their own nor the organization's values were not taken into consideration in that process. In all but one interview, these superintendents commented they reserved unto themselves final decision-making authority although this was exercised only when decisions made by others were not made in the best interests of students, were outside of policy, were contrary to the mission and priorities of the school system, or did not reflect the basic tenets of human dignity. Of course, the Board could supersede the superintendent's authority in any and all matters and could and did, for example, in John's story, make a decision not in the best interests of children (e.g., the arbitrary cancellation of the French Immersion Kindergarten program) but in terms of their own political interests.

Thus, an effective balance had to be achieved between process--involving others and reconciling diverse interests--with the need to make decisions. In other words, form could not dictate function or substance. By focusing on the purpose of the school system, these superintendents showed how both form and substance worked together to the benefit of the students, those who served the students, and the parents of the students.

The literature showed the necessity of achieving consensus and common direction for school systems to the extent that a belief structure could govern the actions of all participants rather than having actions governed by authoritarian or autocratic means. A crucial element in establishing and maintaining this belief process was the concept of trust. Unlike the old adage which holds that "the truth of a man lies first and foremost in what he hides", trust was predicated upon openness and a belief by followers and others in the integrity of the superintendents because their actions were consistent with their stated beliefs and facts, respect for the opinions of others, and belief by the superintendents in the ability of others to act autonomously and correctly. Ethical standards forged the link between what the superintendents wanted for their school systems and their own personal beliefs and actions. As discussed in the previous theme, integrity represented coherence and consistency among organizational aims, personal values and beliefs, and personal behaviour.

Agreements were made not only with external groups; they also were made between these superintendents and the body to which they reported. The integrity of these superintendents was not to be compromised through actions they were directed to take by the Board and with which they might have fundamentally disagreed. While organizational values were formed through and reflected in the actions of these superintendents, they were also formed by the actions of the Board. Political leadership exercised by the Board, in some instances, was top-down as opposed to the desired bottom-up political leadership typically exercised by the superintendent. In effect, the Board's leadership was directive, and substance won out over process. Notwithstanding the superintendent's fundamental values, two choices had to be made: Comply with the Board's decision; or make a decision to work elsewhere.

The concept of integrity permeated the agreement building process--seeking commitments from others as to courses of action--in the educational system. While the agreement process was important, the leadership behaviour of these superintendents in that process was far more important, as these behaviours were predicated upon integrity.

Beliefs about power, authority, relationships with others, and decision-making. Traditionally, power has been viewed in a very negative context, since power usually involves directing others to undertake certain actions, achieve specific results, or demonstrate some allegiance to a particular philosophy. Use of power implies the direct use of sanction or reward to motivate individuals toward superior performance or to accomplish other ends deemed appropriate for the organization. In short, power, in these examples, is used to direct people. The superintendents in this study provided evidence that directive leadership can be and is far more than simply using legitimate power and authority to accomplish particular ends. Influence was used frequently and it may be viewed as directive authority, since actions taken by others are reflective of the influence exerted by superintendents. In addition, power and authority were invariably tempered by fundamental values which determined what and how power and authority would be used.

These superintendents placed high value on maintaining the dignity and worth of individuals, particularly in those instances where decisions about employment or discipline had to be made. Second, the values of empathy and understanding for the positions of others was noted frequently by all of the superintendents. In instances where the severity of the issue was such that actions were viewed as somewhat reprehensible (for example, the dismissal of the caretaker for reasons of incompetence and selling pornographic materials and the dismissal of a principal for inappropriate use of discretion in dealing with students and teachers), the degree of empathy and understanding were less in evidence and matters of contract or justice (legal remedies) tended to predominate. Third, these superintendents used their power to empower others, primarily through establishing structures and processes by which input from others could be sought. While process was very important, focusing on the substance of the school system was always in the forefront for these superintendents. By focusing on substance as well as process, superintendents exercised directive and values-driven leadership.

Analysis of the stories showed that resorting to directive leadership in the superintendency is premised on some fundamental assumptions about people, purposes (i.e., substance), and process: (1) These superintendents could have adopted the point of view that individuals in the organization need to be pushed, prodded, cajoled, or motivated to do things through the use of both external controls and internal commitment; (2) the superintendents felt that the school system needed a strong sense of purpose to unite people toward a common goal; (3) the superintendents felt that goals and the universal commitment toward the goals were more important than the processes used to achieve them and action took precedence over reaction.

In regard to the first assumption, these superintendents were apt to use their power and authority in a direct and visible fashion when the self-interest of other groups and individuals took precedence over the provision of services to students or when self-interest (shown even by the performance of others) precluded the attainment of standards necessary in any and all aspects of the organization. The superintendents frequently commented on the self-interests of teachers, represented through some bargaining activity. Not all of the superintendents, particularly those in Catholic systems, felt that teacher interests tended to surmount the services provided to children. However, all but one superintendent referred to instances where the abuse of position, through inappropriate actions or performance, had to be dealt with and, occasionally, contracts of employment terminated. In these cases, considerable concern was given to process, especially in the legal context, but not at the expense of the ultimate goal of ensuring the provision of high quality services to both the organization and its clients.

This did not mean however, that the superintendents adapted their leadership style to accommodate the vagaries of self-interest. In fact, the opposite was the case. While these superintendents recognized that the various groups in the system would try to advance their own interests, they did not make counteracting this self-interest their main goal. When occasions arose where self-interest was patently obvious, they took a stand and combated it. When the issue was resolved and while it was being resolved, they continued to focus on the goals of the system and offered coherent ideas designed to serve a higher purpose--to direct the behaviour and commitment of others to issues of substance. By fostering a sense of achievement, by stretching strengths rather than emphasizing weaknesses, by encouraging the use of discretion within appropriate boundaries which were philosophically and pragmatically determined, by holding others accountable for this discretion, by empowering others to participate in discussion, analysis, and making decisions on issues, and by emphasizing ideas which focused on providing the best possible services to students, these superintendents directly affected the motivations of others, the overall quality of decisions within the educational system, and the services it provided.

None of these actions took place in isolation--they were directly related to the direction provided by the mission of the organization. Interestingly, some of the superintendents chose to have the Board actively develop the mission statement for the system, but their influence was clearly seen behind the scenes. Some worked closely with individual trustees and provided advice on how the mission statement should be communicated best to others. Others took a far more active approach and used their imagination, their judgment, and their knowledge of education to develop, in concert with the Board and others, a mission for the school system. In short, these superintendents used their own vision to create an attitude of purpose in the system and to formalize it through the adoption of that formal mission statement. This mission statement then formed the basis for what was done in the area of policy development, long- and short-range planning, assessment of progress, and for making improvements where they were deemed to be necessary.

Implicit in all but one of these superintendents' views of the mission statement was the attitude that if they did not actively influence the development of the mission statement, someone else, or some other group, would seek to advance positions, possibly to the detriment of their vision for the system. They felt conflicting views could serve to increase the politics in the system, de-emphasize the common purposes they sought, and reduce the quality of service provided. Further, the involvement of the superintendent ensured a systematic analysis of the educational environment had occurred prior to completing the mission statement. Thus, both vision, based on a set of educational values, and pragmatism, based on logical, systematic, and rational analysis were, if not ensured, at least represented prior to the adoption of the mission statement.

These superintendents spoke of the power of involving others in the development of the mission statement as well, since this involvement represented the value of others' opinions, facilitated the commitment of others to the document, and acknowledged others have valuable input on areas about which the superintendent may not have thought. Again, pragmatism and principles were deeply imbedded in this strategy.

Examination of the use of influence, in terms of power and authority, provided another interesting point of view. While consensus was seen to be desirable, also for reasons both pragmatic and principled, consensus, in and of itself, was not a prerequisite for taking action. Indeed, these superintendents were not prepared to compromise to achieve consensus on items of such critical importance to the school system. Prime among these were the financial operations (there is a bottom line beyond which expenditures cannot go), management rights, and services to children. In areas such as these, the superintendents listened to arguments of others, used persuasion and influence, and, finally, if consensus could not be reached, they were willing to stand and communicate a course of action they deemed best. Consensus and commitment were desirable, but the superintendents were prepared to have consensus develop after they had made a decision. These important decisions were based on a conviction that their points of view were right despite views to the contrary.

The second assumption, the school system needs a strong sense of purpose to unite people toward a common goal was best illustrated by these superintendents recognizing they could not be everywhere in the system at once. However, it was critically important that they sensed their goals and those of the system were understood by and influenced the behaviour of others in the system. In this sense, the overriding sense of purpose, vision, or mission, was to be the primary vehicle by which they affected others. By modeling, these messages were reinforced in and seen by others. In this manner, the power and authority of these superintendents were enhanced and others in the system had both an implicit and explicit understanding of what the superintendent wanted done. While this would not preclude some sort of political action being taken by an individual or a group, it lessened the likelihood that it would occur.

The sense of purpose also was passed on to others in the organization who acted in a leadership capacity--most notably those in the district office or who served in an administrative capacity in the schools. In this sense, and this was exhibited most clearly by John, the superintendent acted as a coach or a mentor, helping others steer on the same course while simultaneously pointing out corrections which would have to be made. There was also an expectation that schools would focus on similar activities, consensually developed, which directly complemented and were consistent with the priorities of the system. Rather than attempting to control and direct all of the system's activities, an impossibility given the diverse demands on the time of the superintendents, they chose to direct and control only a limited number of activities in the system: monitoring and major evaluation activities (e.g., meeting with school principals on an annual basis for priority setting and, on a more regular basis, to determine progress made in achieving those priorities); spending time in the schools to exercise influence and to monitor progress; involvement in the committees established for school evaluations; establishing key policies (a theme explored in the next section); committing resources; and the engagement, placement, and possible termination of personnel. These superintendents also sought to make their school systems the best they could be, a feat they recognized was difficult and must occur over the long run. While it was recognized that perfection could never be achieved, striving for perfection, as George noted, was something deemed to be highly important.

Another phenomenon worthy of mention was the importance these superintendents placed on a major focus for the school system, particularly if that focus represented a major change. Three superintendents were involved in reconfiguring the grades in their district schools; another was involved in revamping the school entrance age; another was involved in expanding programming options; another was involved in adopting a results-based orientation; another was committed to securing more active parent involvement in the schools; and another made it very clear to his Board upon commencement of employment, that actions would have to be taken against a group of teachers who had demonstrated they were not committed to the goals of the school system. All of these represented major points of departure for their school systems since past practices were indicative of the opposite. By focusing on clear and precise objectives and priorities for their systems, these superintendents served to direct the actions of others in the system, secure the commitment of teachers, parents, and trustees, and provide a higher quality of service to the students in the system.

Just as importantly, their actions showed a significant amount of courage, since none of the initiatives was greeted with overwhelming support from groups affected by the change. However, and despite significant opposition, and, at times, a lack of visible and demonstrable support from their school Boards, these superintendents pursued their individual ideals for the system and turned them into action. By doing so, they communicated to others the importance of offering a high quality of service to the students, parents, and staff of the system and a sense that vision, creativity, and ideas were necessary components of developing and improving the system. Further, they communicated the idea that risk was a necessary component of any change process and that risks had to be taken and managed to bring about successful change. Most importantly, they showed that while process was an integral component of their plans to effect a change, the change itself--the substance of what the change was about--was most important.

The third assumption, that the goals and the universal commitment toward the goals were more important than the processes used to achieve them and that action took precedence over reaction, is clearly evidenced in how and why the superintendents involved others in decision-making throughout the system. Three primary considerations guided these superintendents in this choice: (1) The size and complexity of the educational system precluded them and the Board from directly making every decision which needed to be made, on a daily and hourly basis in the system; (2) superintendents, while they were extremely knowledgeable about education and the dynamics of their own systems, did not and could not possess all of the relevant facts and ideas necessary to make decisions in a unilateral manner; and (3) leadership exercised by others could multiply that of the superintendent if others were given the autonomy to make decisions in their own purview.

Clearly, the first two reasons demonstrated a tendency toward pragmatism and consequentialism (keeping things simple enabled others, particularly the principals, to work directly and personally on problems without actively involving the superintendent); the latter involved higher principles and a belief in the ability of others to exercise discretion in an appropriate manner. Beyond these principles, the commonly held belief that those who make the decisions were more committed to them than if someone else made the decision reflected a value on the ability of others to make right decisions in the right way. These superintendents also exercised both power and authority in engaging personnel for the school system and then establishing expectations for their performance.

Another critical area emerged in the analysis of material and this concerned the values inherent in relationships these superintendents had with others in the school system. Relationships were viewed as critical in education since its primary purpose is to serve people. Three key values emerged in the analysis of the stories told by the superintendents: (1) respect and dignity for individuals; (2) trust; and (3) honesty. The day-to-day relationships these superintendent had with others were developed and maintained by on-going, personal contact with others. In these formal and informal contacts, the superintendents talked about key initiatives of the system, key beliefs, and clear directions. In addition, and just as importantly, these superintendents listened to the concerns of others, sought feedback on initiatives taken and the personal and professional situations of the individuals involved, and developed and expressed empathy for the needs of others.

As in the assumptions regarding power and authority, relationships with others represented both pragmatic and principled points of view. In relation to the former, relationships, maintained and supported in both formal and informal ways, facilitated communication and allowed the superintendents to determine, first hand and at the point of delivery, what the concerns of the individuals were. Access to unfiltered, accurate, and timely information allowed these superintendents to assess the progress of the system, make judgments, and, possibly, stop problems before they became problems. The last was especially important at the Board level, where the superintendents worked conscientiously to develop and maintain relationships with individual trustees, possibly to practice politicking to accomplish particular ends. In those instances where superintendent-trustee relationships could not be developed adequately, one participant cogently stated negative consequences could very easily accrue.

All these superintendents spoke of the necessity for preserving basic human dignity, especially in relationships threatened by conflict over continued employment, discipline, or inappropriate behaviour. Indeed, in those instances, such as experienced by Peter, where human dignity was violated, outrage was expressed. In some instances, the superintendents, despite the position held, were unable to prevent others, even at the Board level, from denigrating the individual. Personal experiences, as demonstrated by Leonard and George, prompted them never to treat others as they themselves were treated. As mentioned in another theme, Leonard sought never to be perceived as a "twit", one who made commitments and did not honour them, as one who abused power, or as one who did not respect the value of the individual. John believed disciplining others or taking corrective action had to be done in a sensitive manner, such that those concerned would accept the rebuke and thank him for it at the conclusion of the exercise.

Other values regarding relationships were inherent in the stories. The Catholic superintendents, in particular, were concerned that they demonstrated the three C's of Catholic education in all of their dealings with others: Caring; Compassion; and Christianity. George felt that Catholics, and he as a Catholic superintendent, should make no more fuss about being Catholic in a verbal sense than they did in their actions. This should not be construed to mean the public school superintendents valued caring and compassion any less than did the Catholic superintendents; because of the nature of the public school setting, the religious base, to which all of those public school superintendents ascribed, did not receive the degree of attention paid to it by the Catholic superintendents.

Fundamental values, outlined in theme one, played a critical role in how superintendents approached relationships with others. These included the values of trust, honesty, openness, integrity, consistency, fairness, respect, tolerance of differing values and views, candor, and substance. While all the superintendents expressed a strong mission to serve children by positively impacting those who served the children, and an equally strong desire to be competitive and move away from the status quo, there may very well be created an attitude in the minds of others that these superintendents are so single-minded they are not attuned to the wants, needs, and aspirations of others. James' story illustrated this in a dramatic sense.

Superintendents in this study often reflected on this very notion and sometimes had to make changes in how they approached others to ensure high standards were being met. However, and this must be abundantly clear, when standards were not being met by others, efforts at improvement had failed, and self-interest became paramount over serving children and the goals of the system, the superintendents were prepared to move against the individual.

Whether this meant transferring the individual to another, more suitable position, or terminating the contract of employment, they did so. They viewed retaining the individual in that position as injurious to morale, inconsistent with the stated goals and mission of the school system, and violating the trust placed in the school system by its clients to provide the best quality education possible to students.

Beliefs about policy development and implementation. Superintendents were expected to provide leadership in policy development by suggesting alternative instruments which addressed specific decision-making needs within the school system. However, three essential issues emerged which needed be resolved in the policy process: (1) To what extent must the superintendent be concerned with the policy process; (2) to what extent must the superintendent be concerned with the substance of direction to be established within the policy; and (3) to what extent must both considerations be balanced such that process reflected the wants, needs, and desires of others without losing track of the substance needed to establish direction consistent with not only the organizational mission and values, but also with the mission, vision, and values of the superintendent?

The opportunity existed for the superintendents in this study to provide directive leadership through the policy process. However, these superintendents chose not to use policy in a directive fashion and chose, rather, to use policy as a vehicle to enhance and build the capacity of others to exercise discretion in making decisions at the point where decisions could most effectively be made. One superintendent specifically viewed policy as means to enhance the value that teachers placed on their work, enabling them to contribute to worthwhile purposes, and creating a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work. For him, the success of others was enhanced through policies which created an overall culture in the system, emphasizing a sense of purpose which went beyond self-interest. Another superintendent commented that the implementation of a new policy profoundly affecting the delivery of education was characterized not by the top-down directive model, but, rather, by having those most affected develop the implementation strategy.

For all the superintendents, who were expected to play an integral part of the policy process through their involvement on policy committees of their Boards and in the resolution of policy issues (e.g., the teacher evaluation policy, the principal evaluation policy, the student evaluation policy), the superintendents modeled a moral tone for the school system and reinforced its purposes. As in all other areas, but especially in decision-making, the actions of the superintendents could not be viewed in the context of a "one-man show". The involvement of others was critical for these superintendents for both pragmatic and principled reasons.

The superintendents knew the constraints of time, expertise, knowledge of all situations, and the demands for the involvement of others in making decisions about policy directly affecting them precluded overly large impacts being made by the superintendent on policy development and implementation. Invariably, the mission statement for the school system became the focal point for policy discussions, subsuming, to a certain extent, the views of individual superintendents. Unfortunately, some superintendents spoke of the predominance of self-interests over the purposes of the school system. In these instances, there was less sharing and consensus on policy issues and their resolution, and more direction consistent with system beliefs and concern for the "bottom line" benefits to students and "bottom line" financial viability of the system.

Generally, however, the shared values embodied in the mission statement for the system were used to guide policy discussions. These values were used to generate greater personal commitment from others to the resolution of the issue and to increase empathy and understanding for the positions of others.

The importance of the goals and values of the school system, also reflecting the values and goals of these superintendents, cannot be understated. It was these values and goals which defined what was to be offered to students and the broad processes used to deliver those services. When policy conflicts arose, it was these goals which shaped the process of issues resolution in the school systems. Invariably, the mission statements emphasized the importance of developing students' abilities and capacities to the fullest extent possible. However, the mission statements also recognized the unique contributions teachers, parents, the Board, and the community could make in ensuring this occurred. Thus, these superintendents were quick to resort to processes inferred in the mission statement and involved others in the resolution of issues in general, and, for the purposes of this analysis, policy conflicts in particular.

Changes which could be achieved through the development and implementation of policy were questioned to determine if, first of all, policy was needed to provide necessary guidance and change. Again, and just as importantly, policies were always viewed in the context of the mission statement for the system. By inference, it is conjectured that unless the policy helped to better achieve the broad goals of the system, changes in organizational structure, operations, and basic "rules" would not occur. As one superintendent noted, a prime consideration or the development of policy was "do we need it? If it isn't broke, don't fix it" (George, p. 36)! A further consideration applied: Policy changes had to be viewed in terms of the long term benefits which would accrue to the school system and to the clients of the school system. All of the superintendents described major policy changes which were seen and believed to improve significantly services to the students. These major policy changes were not achieved without significant cost for the superintendents involved although, to a person, they fought strongly for the policies since the policies were related to student opportunity.

Timing of policy changes was also critical for the superintendents since they realized the success of policy initiatives depended upon the circumstances in their systems and the willingness of others to commit to the initiative. This is not to say, however, that policy was governed by opportunism. On the contrary, the superintendents had to determine the values and interests of others to determine if initiatives could stand a very good chance of being implemented. Empathy for the values and positions of others was seen to be essential in identifying, promoting, and defending policy positions. This empathy, perhaps even in those cases where self-interest was expressed, was translated into actions and goals and objectives which reinforced shared values. Also in this context, the superintendents had to know when to "push" and when to "let things ride". Conveying a sense of urgency was desirable but not at the expense of all other aspects of the system.

In many cases, desired policy initiatives could not be undertaken because of shortage of funds in the budget. Surprisingly, most of the superintendents, and Leonard in particular, chose to view this limitation as a challenge rather than a constraint, and they actively sought other ways to achieve what was deemed to be most important. It was in this area that the belief in others to offer suggestions and input became most evident. This view was consistent with the view expressed by the superintendents that policy should serve to enhance and build the capacity of others in the system. By involving others directly in suggesting policy alternatives and alternative ways to achieve a specific policy initiative which enjoyed the commitment of others, the superintendents could achieve success. Notwithstanding the expressed belief that policy should serve to enhance and capacity-build, some superintendents felt there were some things which were too important to leave to the discretion of others. As one superintendent noted, "There are some things where you're not going to leave any loopholes, and others where discretion can certainly be used by people" (Leonard, p. 54). What those areas are is a subject of interpretation, but it is conjectured these areas dealt with legal requirements, appeals of process, student discipline, and financial management, which is subject to external audit.

Finally, the policy process was governed by the same values expressed by these superintendents in every theme in this chapter: Integrity; fairness; empathy; credibility; trust; interdependence; the worth and dignity of others; a sense of purpose; and honesty.

Beliefs about management and leadership of the superintendent. These superintendents occupied the highest position within the local education hierarchy. But, the literature showed that the appearance of a significant amount of power and authority accruing to the position is complemented by an equally distressing trend for local trustees, community groups, and professional groups to attach significant blame to the superintendent for things which go wrong and for general dissatisfaction with the overall course of events occurring within the system.

Leadership was what these superintendents felt they were expected to demonstrate. In the extreme, they knew that failure to provide leadership could result in their dismissal because the school system would operate in a status quo situation, with little educational change occurring, few directions being set, and anomie occurring at the political level.

Analyzing the stories showed that these superintendents felt political leadership was premised on some basic assumptions about human nature. One assumption reflected the notion that individuals were self-serving and, as such, served to drive apart any concerted organizational impetus or direction in favour of their own directions and wishes. Thus, self-interest became the motivating factor behind individual actions. A second assumption reflected the notion that change, at an organizational or individual level, would be resisted unless the change was in the best interests of the individual. Obviously, the assumptions, if accepted and acted upon, could result in a bureaucratic, top-down, directive model of leadership reminiscent of the scientific management theories advanced in the early twentieth century. In effect, either assumption could serve to divide the forces of the organization, pitting one against the other, as self-interest seeks to win out at the expense of the collective good.

These superintendents had significant power to shape and determine organizational goals, develop and implement policies, allocate resources, engage and reassign staff, and distribute information such that particular ends are met. The ways in which power was used in these instances was testimony to the leadership and management styles of the individual who occupied that position. In addition, the degree to which these superintendents established and maintained relationships with others in the organization represented a form of power, to be used by either party, in seeking ends. The manner in which self-interest was viewed--as an aberration or as a fact of organizational life--determined, to a large extent, the behaviour of the superintendent.

The superintendents responded in two ways, although the first response was seldom used by some and never by others: They made some unilateral and directive decisions, in concert with appropriate policies developed by the Board, such that control of the educational enterprise was more rigid, and oriented toward compliance and rule-following; or they recognized authority in the educational enterprise was fragmented and beyond rigid control, expertise was dispersed among varying partners in the organization, information necessary to make decisions was not always readily and immediately accessible by the superintendent, negotiation occurred to ensure various groups could maximize their access to resources, and decisions could be made by those closest to the decision who have the relevant expertise, interest, and information. The latter point of view also required recognizing that the skills needed in decision-making were developed over time and that mistakes could and would occur despite the drive to perfection.

A number of the superintendents expressed the belief that in education, those involved directly at the delivery level have greater expertise and are closer to the problems than are the superintendents. In this light, they used the expertise of others to identify problems and potential solutions. This was viewed not only as desirable, but also as a necessity, particularly in the smaller school jurisdictions. However, this necessity was governed by faith--faith held by the superintendents in the abilities of others to make appropriate decisions commensurate with their skills and authority and commensurate with appropriate accountability mechanisms.

How did these superintendents manage and exercise leadership in a school system and in schools which have been characterized as managerially loose but culturally tight? The fragmented nature of the school system required these superintendents to be orchestrators (James used this term), managing the diverse and fragmented interests of others such that they may be directed to accomplish broad organizational goals and much more specific organizational objectives. As their school systems became more diverse and complex, and as authority and responsibilities, too, became more diverse and incapable of direction from one individual, these superintendents recognized they had less ability to affect others through direction and control.

Notwithstanding their limited ability to control and direct in an active fashion, these superintendents felt they had overall responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational organization. By setting, usually in a consultative fashion, the systems' goals and objectives, these superintendents helped others to achieve high performance in providing service to students and other clients of the education system. However, it is also important to recognize the overall mission or goals of the system were determined, largely, by the times in which they were developed. Thus, they too must change to reflect emerging realities.

Changing goals and objectives required flexibility but the overall mission, which served to unite the efforts of others, was still be the overriding source of strategic and tactical planning decisions. Two questions must be asked in relation to these superintendents: Were their actions determined by pragmatism, by the vagaries of changing times and circumstances, or was there something more constant, something which they communicated to others, through actions, what they stood for and, by extension, the school system as well?

Nearly all of the superintendents in this study spoke of the necessity for developing annual objectives and priorities for themselves and the school system as a measure of the progress made. The results orientation in Alberta required this be so. However, is it appropriate to set objectives for others, knowing full well the very process may set off a chain of reactions based on the self-interests of others and which may be counter to the best intentions of the superintendent? Negotiation of the specific objectives became an important activity such that there was a mutual commitment to the objectives as opposed to compliance with objectives set for the schools or personnel in the system. Through negotiation, consensus and teamwork emerged, flexibility was achieved, and individual initiative recognized. In this manner, strategy was not reduced to a specific formula and the human elements such as morale, leadership, individual knowledge, and the ability to exercise discretion were not only respected, they were viewed as essential components of effectiveness. Hence, these superintendents did not simply develop and analyze strategies. They assisted others in analyzing information and making decisions by managing the overall context in which those decisions were made.

Leadership in the political arena, for these superintendents, was also achieved by negotiating structural or systemic changes within the organization. The superintendents exercising effective political leadership through this strategy not only recognized the "stakes" for the other parties involved, they also recognized secondary effects for those individuals. Thus, there was a need for significant information about the values, personalities, and preferences of others. Approaches which maximized support and minimized resistance were sought after and, at times, pragmatism, as evidenced though identifying solutions which were satisfactory (i.e., the best that can be obtained at this time) rather than the best, became as important as principles.

However, these superintendents chose to use what was best for students as the maxim for evaluating decisions they and others made. Negotiated settlements with others tended to model what was to come. Principles were reflected in the negotiated settlements which served as precedents for future problem-solving in similar areas. Conflict was recognized as counterproductive rather than energizing, generally destructive rather than constructive, and leading to winners and losers. Again, the maxim for evaluating decisions and negotiated settlements must be stated: Actions taken and decisions made reflected what was best for students. On this point, there was no negotiation for superintendents.

For these superintendents, political leadership, while necessary, was not viewed as necessarily sufficient for effective superintendent leadership. First, political leadership was seen to stress a highly pragmatic point of view, and the superintendent strove to find things which would work. Rationality drove the decision process and efforts were expended to determine opposition to and support for alternatives, the stakeholders in problems, identification of alternatives based on lowest degree of potential conflict, identification of ways to maximize the impact of decisions throughout the organization, and determination of win-win strategies and solutions for those who were most critical to successfully implementing a solution to a problem.

Thus, considerable emphasis was given to the process of issue resolution--almost as much as upon the substance of the issues involved. Leadership was determined, to a large extent, by the superintendent's vision, negotiations with multiple parties, adjustments to changing times and circumstances, and the degree to which others could be influenced by the actions and vision of the superintendent. Rationality was one aspect of the leadership dilemma. A truism may be appropriate: If the philosophical orientation, advocating that a mind (or, by extension, people) becomes (become) detrimental when its (their) intellectual capacity surpasses its (their) integrity, reflects a danger when rationality and intellectual analysis are used exclusively in leadership, something else is needed as a balance. The balance came from leadership based on their values which, while they reflected a concern for the political nature of education, focused on desirable ends.

The political dimension of the school system could not be overlooked but neither could political issues--those which focused on process--overshadow the necessity of substance in the school system--what the system was all about, what it sought to do, and the importance placed on the individuals in that system and those on the outside who interact with it. These superintendents saw leadership as mobilizing others to accomplish higher purposes than those attributed to simple self-interest. As a result, far more was required to have others commit, focus, demonstrate energy, and creativity in the work they did than simple contractual exchanges where people provide a service in return for some extrinsic reward. While the superintendents recognized that material and extrinsic needs of employees must be met in their school system, other intrinsic needs, including creativity, exercising initiative and discretion, recognition for work done, problem-solving and decision-making, pride, and accomplishment were also viewed as important. These intrinsic needs provided for and ensured superior performance and commitment to the work being done. The alternative--compliance and rule-following--was not seen to be desirable.

The superintendents felt that the educational system operated much like a family or a community wherein norms, values, expectations, unwritten rules, and relationships were communicated to others in a developmental fashion. These fundamental beliefs represented the manner in which the superintendents and others determined problems, devised solutions, and then made decisions. Most importantly, these beliefs revolved around relationships between people and the superintendents expressed strong moral beliefs in this regard--treating others right because, as individuals, they should expect no less. Values exhibited by the superintendents were viewed as important in influencing the behaviour of others, particularly as others attempted to achieve the mission of the school system.

These superintendents also knew their behaviour set a moral tone for the education system and reinforced its primary aims. Nowhere was this view seen more clearly than in the decisions the superintendent made or in the decisions which others were encouraged and supported to make. Decisions reflected the basic values of the individual and of the organization, but these superintendents could not make all of the decisions. While the values of these superintendents were reflected in decision-making and in relationships with others, they recognized that the sheer magnitude of the their work and the constrained ability they had to influence directly and physically all aspects of the educational system required a sense of commitment from others to something which went beyond the superintendent. Thus, they expressed the view that the educational system itself and its aims must engender a sense of loyalty and commitment from others such that the institution itself is worthy of support from others. For these superintendents, values-added leadership was transformational leadership and values such as trust, integrity, fairness, and respect for the individual were believed to improve communication, decision-making, relationships with others, and evaluation of individuals and services provided.

Values articulated and modeled by these superintendents served to attract well qualified teachers (as Leonard so clearly demonstrated), and engendered in others a sense of commitment to and fulfillment in their work, ultimately resulting in improved services to the students and their parents. Commitment underpinned the resolution of difficulties and problems which arose in the normal course of events. Superintendents felt that developing and maintaining this commitment was predicated upon articulating and inculcating a higher sense of purpose for the education system--what it was all about, what principles guided its operations, and what unique contribution it could make to the education of students. Short term objectives resulting from the necessity to resolve immediate problems were often ignored in pursuing higher purposes and long term benefits. What was critical about the fundamental philosophy built on values was that both the values and mission must be shared.

These superintendents clearly believed their beliefs had to reflect an order of preference and importance: The student and the parent were to obtain a high quality of service from the employees and the system. Values found in both the mission statement and the jurisdiction's operations were defended by these superintendents and rarely was their defense delegated. Watched over, monitored, and used as the basis for evaluating success, these fundamental values were simply too important to be protected by others. These values were expected to be emulated, respected, and used by others in their own decision-making and problem-solving.

Values were present in the management and structural characteristics of their school systems. In regard to the notion of decentralized decision-making, these superintendents' values were clearly seen. Local initiative was fostered, bureaucratic rule-following was discouraged, and the fair and just treatment of staff and students were expected. The rationale behind such an approach was relatively obvious: If others in the educational enterprise shared the values articulated by the superintendent and reflected in the mission statement and general objectives for the system, decisions made by others would reflect those values. Further, the self-interest, expressed predominately by one major group in the enterprise--the teachers--may be subsumed or at least lessened as they too attempted to serve students in the best possible ways.

This did not mean however, that the values and feelings of groups were not respected or viewed with a degree of empathy. It did mean these values could not be the focal point of the educational system; it had to serve a higher purpose and this higher purpose had to be communicated by the actions of these superintendents. Again, shared values were critical in assessing progress and determining actions to be taken.

To what extent did these superintendents feel they had to be visibly seen or have a high profile in values-driven leadership? It was less critical for the superintendents to be involved in incidents where significant values issues come to the fore than to have developed the capacity in others to use values similar to those articulated by the superintendent and adopted within the organization. As was pointed out, the superintendent physically could not be present because of the exigencies of time and circumstance at all meetings held to discuss problems or to make decisions. Rather, the presence was felt in other ways--perhaps unconsciously by others. Knowing when to be involved in what are seen to be major value issues was more important than being involved in resolving all issues. In either instance, a message was given to others--a message which based on fundamental values of the superintendent and the organization.

These superintendents acted in accordance with a set of values visible in three areas. First, they established a direction others chose to follow. The direction was more important than being seen to lead others, in a direct and visible fashion, as they proceeded to accomplish specific ends. Thus, clear statements about what the superintendent wished for the school system had to be established, communicated, and internalized by others who did the day-to-day work in the school system, providing the services for which the system exists.

Second, the superintendents who espoused these sentiments did not espouse them lightly--they worked extremely hard to see that they were reflected in the organization on an on-going, daily, regular, and systematic basis. Many experienced personal sacrifice in terms of their own time and family to ensure things happened. Thus, a tremendous ownership was felt by these superintendents to affect, in the strongest and most positive sense possible, the affairs of the system. In short, their system was an extension of themselves and reflected what it was they believed and held most dear.

Finally, these superintendents believed that espousing ideals, while necessary, was not necessarily sufficient to ensure they were adopted and used by others as a basis for their own actions. Decisions made and problems solved demonstrated, or modeled, those fundamental beliefs, values, and ideals. It was in this fashion that integrity was paramount--putting what one believes into practice. Much like parents must aver the practice in raising children by advising them to "do as I say and not as I do", the superintendents practiced their craft consistent with their beliefs.

Relationship of the Literature to the Research Findings

Introduction

Relating the literature to the findings is an extremely important part of this study for one serves to inform the other. The literature germane to each theme which emerged from the data analysis is dealt with in order.

Theme One: Personal and Professional Beliefs and Values

The degree of correspondence between the literature and the findings in theme one is extremely high. In the first instance, superintendents universally found themselves in the business of judging--judging appropriate actions to take, judging situations, judging the degree of self-interest over the communitarian good, and judging their own performance and that of others against the yardsticks they had established. Secondly, McLeod's (1984) listing of motivations for superintendents, both of higher and lower orders, had a virtual one-to-one correspondence with those identified in this study. Visibility, participation at public meetings (often to the detriment of the time spent at home with their families), exercising influence at all formal and informal opportunities, and the massive amount of care taken in preparing for and following up on Board agenda and issues were all mentioned by those participating in this study.

On a higher order scale of motivations, these superintendents espoused a desire to improve the overall quality of education and believed that by being a superintendent, they could influence the educational process to a much greater extent than they could had they stayed in another lesser administrative capacity. Mission, vision, and a strong sense of purpose were found in all study participants as was their desire to instill this in their subordinates. Many superintendents commented that their modeling behaviours had to be consistent with their statements about expected behaviours from others. They believed loyalty to their Board, through good and bad decisions, was expected and had to be demonstrated. All possessed a high degree of concern for others in the system in lesser positions of authority. As one superintendent stated, "You get teachers to be considerate of their students by being considerate of teachers" (Luke, p. 12).

Interestingly, the degree of security felt by the superintendents varied from very secure to highly insecure with little middle ground. Those who were less secure knew they were less secure and took extra pains to ensure the Board was given no extra ammunition "to shoot" the superintendent. One superintendent also confirmed McLeod's (1984) hypothesis about future career prospects being dimmed by actions taken by a Board not in agreement with the superintendent's vision and style of operation. Universally, the superintendents were both functionaries and technocrats. One superintendent described himself as walking in the image of the cowboy, presenting himself as a mover and a shaker, and a doer. All recognized they had significant power to influence Board directions through the recommendations made to the Board and the assessment of alternatives which always accompanied the recommendations.

Unlike McLeod (1984) who advocated that "difficulty arises in establishing consensus with respect to the *socially desirable ends* pursued by the functionary using the *most rational means*" (p. 183), these superintendents strongly argued, at times very passionately, for the best services possible within the fiscal restraints experienced by the school system. In a manner much like that advocated by Hodgkinson (1983), these superintendents often overcame the limits of rationality and analytical reasoning by advocating for positions based on deeply held principles. This could be summed up in the old adage of "where there's a will, there's a way".

Genge's (1991) work on effective superintendents can be readily applied to this study as well, with one notable exception. While those superintendents in Genge's (1991) study infrequently mentioned character traits such as credibility, devotion, dedication, possessing principles, respect, honesty, being courageous, energetic, enthusiastic, and involving others in decisions, those superintendents in this study frequently mentioned all and more of these traits and viewed them as essential in determining their own effectiveness and that of the school system.

Hord's (1991) and Robert's (1991) studies relate to this study as well. Instructional planning, monitoring, evaluating, ensuring accountability, setting standards, developing and articulating both a mission and a vision, selection of teaching and administrative personnel, developing and maintaining relationships with others, empowering others through active involvement in decision-making and setting priorities, and advocating for public education were similarly seen as essential by the superintendents in this study.

Hodgkinson's (1983) Values Typology was useful only to a limited extent in addressing the study findings in this theme. While Hodgkinson (1983) hypothesized that only 5% of administrators worked in the principled area or Level I of his typology, the findings of this study cannot support that conclusion. The findings of this study clearly illustrate the importance of principles to superintendents, particularly the strong religious base from which those principles spring. Secondly, it is apparent that superintendents have a high value on pragmatism and consequentialism, but not nearly to the degree advocated by Hodgkinson (1983). It cannot be said that superintendents chose options, or made decisions, or solved problems on what could be termed "satisficing" although it was recognized in negotiations that agreements may very well be the best that could be obtained at the time.

On the other hand, Leithwood's and Steinbach's (1991) Classification of Values Potentially Relevant in Administration provided a much closer approximation to those expressed by superintendents in this study. Hodgkinson's (1983) typology may be far more restrictive in the number and types of values identified than is that of Leithwood and

Steinbach (1991). In addition, the work of the latter authors does not place the degree of emphasis on pragmatism and consequentialism that Hodgkinson's (1983) model does. While consequences were important to superintendents, they placed greater importance on acting ethically, demonstrating trust, honesty, openness, and respect for others because these were the right things to do rather than because they feared the consequences of acting in opposite ways.

The literature was replete with the notions of stress caused for superintendents because of the increasing politicization of education, multiple demands of multiple groups, "going to the top", evaluations which reflect what went wrong rather than what went right, self-interest supplanting the communitarian good, and meeting multiplicity of demands in a time of severe fiscal restraint. Study findings would corroborate all of these statements but the findings have also indicated significant stress for superintendents because of deteriorating relationships with trustees and the community over proposed changes to the education system, the feelings of powerlessness when dealing with the Board and individual trustees when relationships have deteriorated, and second-guessing actions taken particularly in regard to terminating contracts of employment. Superintendent values formed the basis for resolving many of these difficulties for, as one superintendent stated, "If you know you're right, it doesn't bother you as much as the ambiguity of wondering if you're right" (Henry, p. 16).

Finally, Immegart's (1988) depiction of leadership as a multi-faceted phenomenon strongly influenced by values, mission, vision, ethics, and culture closely parallels the findings of this study. Events which occur are interpreted through the values, mission, and vision screen held by each superintendent. The degree to which the superintendent consciously assesses ethics, values, mission, and vision in light of each event is open to extensive questioning since all of these are held in the unconscious and their use becomes an unconscious activity. Catholic superintendents varied in the degree to which they consciously assessed their own actions against their religious beliefs to ensure rightness and goodness. While one superintendent held conversations with members of the Trinity, another did not mention the religious base until questioned about it since he felt it was such a natural part of his style that it did not deserve mentioning. All public superintendents indicated they, too, had a strong religious faith which served as the basis for their personal values and which had a pronounced effect upon their professional values.

Themes Two: Assessing the Rightness of Decisions

Theme Three: Beliefs Regarding the Building of Agreements and Reconciling Diverse Political Interests

The agreement building process was of extreme importance to superintendents but so too was the substance of those agreements. Superintendents began with a careful appraisal of facts and then, by careful application of their own values and principles, made an interpretation so that a decision could be made. The "metavalue[s]" (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 5) of logic and rationality were scarcely mentioned in the context Hodgkinson (1983) would have us believe. Indeed, the opposite occurred and, discounting the effect of the nature of the study on the respondents, all superintendents spoke ardently of the importance of making moral choices, demonstrating ethical behaviour, integrity, and resolving conflicts such that others were not deprived of their dignity and worth. Normative rationality was present, in abundance, in every story told by these superintendents.

Certainly the political context in which these superintendents operated required them to pay due and careful attention to facilitating, supporting, achieving consensus, collaborating with others, and leaving behind the old notion of arbitrarily and unilaterally making decisions. As well, superintendents experienced the "heat" of having to make difficult decisions and, when looking for support from trustees, found that "trustees are politicians. They react rather than proact, and sometimes they really move only to save their own ass[es]" (Henry, p. 38).

These superintendents had a strong desire to serve others, particularly the students. Universally, they believed they could make a more substantial difference to the education of students and to those who served students by being a superintendent. This finding is consistent with McLeod's (1984) work.

Finally, these superintendents spent a considerable amount of time preparing for and following up on Board meeting agenda to ensure the trustees had adequate and proper information on which to make decisions. Invariably, they worked closely with the Board Chairman to provide information and advice in an attempt to influence the final decisions made. Both pragmatism and principles heavily influenced superintendent behaviour in this regard, particularly in those instances where the relationship between the superintendent and the Board or individual trustees was not as desirable as it could be.

These superintendents assessed the rightness of their decisions according to a set of prejudices or values founded, as was mentioned previously, on a highly developed sense of religious, personal, and professional morality. These religious beliefs, and the expectations for behaviour reflected in them, provided the ethical nature of their decision-making--as Lyons (1991) pointed out, a "sensitive moral compass". In addition, rightness was based on principles rather than situational imperatives. Perhaps the greatest value to be used in this area was that of integrity, also mentioned earlier. Universally, the superintendents strove to do the right thing as opposed to simply doing things right--a finding totally consistent with Sergiovanni's (1991) admonition.

Theme Four: Power, Authority, Relationships With Others, and Decision-Making

Much of the literature in relation to this topic dealt with the moral imperative that must temper the use of power and authority. Also evident in the literature was the need for effective relationships between the superintendent and others in the system.

In a manner consistent with the admonitions of Sergiovanni (1991), Lyons (1991), Robinson and Moulton (1985), and Follett (1927, 1932), superintendents in this study placed a high value on maintaining the dignity and worth of individuals, particularly in those instances where employment decisions had to be made or where students had to be disciplined. However, and notwithstanding this finding, the humanity of the superintendents was readily apparent when the cases were sufficiently reprehensible that empathy for the individual was sacrificed to the principles of natural justice and contract.

Always, the superintendents were highly conscious of the potential effect of their own actions on others in the school system. Just as importantly, they were also conscious of the effects of their actions on themselves, particularly in regard to their continued employment as superintendent. If, as Follett (1927, 1932) advised, power comes from others, superintendents sought actively to empower others through a number of processes, particularly in regard to decision-making. However, this empowerment was never at the expense of the primary aims of the school systems and, in this regard, superintendents insisted upon substance and stood for critical values. This is entirely consistent with directive leadership but this directive leadership must be based, as Sergiovanni (1991) noted, on what is right as opposed to simply what is deemed to be good.

Finally, relationships with individuals were viewed as ends unto themselves rather than as simply a means to accomplish an end. Interdependence was found in every story told by the superintendents and caring was aptly and formidably displayed in many, many cases. Where interdependence tended to break down somewhat was at the Board level when trustees themselves adopted legitimate authority and power as the base for their dealings with the superintendent. In these instances, the true test of morality and values came to the fore and superintendents, despite how they were being treated, did not resort to treating others in the same manner.

Theme Five: Policy Development and Implementation

Another major area of changes to the administrative role was considered to be significant for superintendents. Formerly, superintendents established system policy and direction, controlled the release of information to trustees, and decided what to do. Generally, these roles were not inconsistent with the expectations that trustees had for the superintendents in relation to making decisions in regard to goal setting, policy development and implementation.

Within the area of policy development, McLeod (1984) noted that "the educational administrator acts as something more than an honest broker between competing interests" (p. 187), thus providing the superintendent with a significant capacity for exerting power and influence. In the capacity of functionary, the superintendent, as a policy implementor and as a policy-maker, can filter and control information, reduce or expand the nature and range of policy options presented to the politicians, fix the timetable for dealing with policy issues, and control agenda.

Surprisingly, the area of policy development did not emerge in as dominant a manner as predicted in the literature. While Boyd (1988) made much of the use of the economic paradigm as the philosophical underpinning of educational policy and decried the lack of interpretivist approaches, superintendents viewed policy as facilitating the use of discretion by others. Simultaneously, there was, in the policy area, an emphasis on accountability for the exercise of discretion but this should not be viewed in a negative context. Trusting others to do the right things consistent with the stated mission and vision for the school system caused superintendents to view policy as system enhancing and capacity-building rather than as restrictive and demanding of compliance.

Clearly superintendents were actively involved in all aspects of the policy process and did act, as McLeod (1984) noted, as a broker between competing interests.

Theme Six: Management and Leadership of the Superintendent

Leadership is a primary role assumed by any superintendent of schools. In the extreme, failure to provide leadership often results in dismissal. In cases where leadership is deficient, the school system may continue to operate in a status quo situation, with little educational change occurring, few directions being set, and anomie occurring at the political level. On the other hand, superintendents exercise leadership in the political context in which they work, motivate others to achieve superior levels of performance, pull others together in view of the splintering forces which seem to permeate the school system environment in Canada today, and overcome the bureaucratic tendencies of the education system to be resistant to change.

The eight superintendents who participated in the study provided a better understanding of how they achieved these goals as they worked in their own environments. They also provided a better understanding of their motivations in taking on such an arduous role. Two types of leadership are particularly germane for the interpretation of the superintendents' stories: political leadership; and values-driven leadership. Some background is necessary to provide a context for the interpretations which follow.

Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989) have provided some valuable insights into political and values-driven leadership. Although this material was not part of the literature review, it is appropriate to introduce it at this point since it serves to illustrate, in a significant way, how the study findings can be further informed. Political leadership (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989, p. 13) is premised on some basic assumptions about human nature. One assumption reflects the notion that individuals are self-serving and, as such, serve to drive apart any concerted organizational impetus or direction in favour of their own directions and wishes. Thus, self-interest becomes the motivating factor behind individual actions. A second assumption reflects the notion that change, at an organizational or individual level, will be resisted unless the change is in the best interests of the individual. Obviously, the assumptions, if accepted and acted upon, could result in a bureaucratic, top-down, directive model of leadership reminiscent of the scientific management theories advanced in the early twentieth century. In effect, either assumption serves to divide the forces of the organization, pitting one against the other, as self-interest seeks to win out at the expense of the collective good.

The literature review was replete with the notions of self-interest, street-level bureaucracy seeking to subvert any meaningful policy changes, individual rights versus the communitarian good, winning at someone else's expense, and getting and keeping power to advance and maintain individual and group interests. Self-interest, a highly divisive force, may be termed a basic human tendency and has, as its motivation, personal advancement. These views, serving to illustrate the importance of power and its exercise, are reflected in interpreting information in a manner consistent with the specific interests of the individual or a group with whom the individual strongly identifies, making decisions which serve to protect and advance fiefdoms, or controlling information flow so that the information itself becomes a source of increased power.

Superintendents, because of their position in the educational hierarchy, have significant power to shape and determine organizational goals, develop and implement policies, allocate resources, engage and reassign staff, and distribute information such that particular ends are met. The ways in which power is used in these instances is testimony to the leadership and management styles of the individual occupying that position. In addition, the degree to which the superintendent establishes and maintains relationships with others in the organization may represent a medium of exchange, a form of power, to be used by either party, in seeking ends. The manner in which self-interest is viewed--as an aberration or as a fact of organizational life--will determine, to a large extent, the behaviour of the superintendent.

As John's story showed, a superintendent can respond in one of two ways: by making unilateral and directive decisions, in concert with appropriate policies developed by the Board, in as many areas as possible, such that control of the educational enterprise is rigid, oriented toward compliance and rule-following; or by recognizing authority in the educational enterprise is fragmented and beyond rigid control, expertise is dispersed among varying partners in the organization, information necessary to make decisions is not always readily and immediately accessible to the individual who is dominant in the hierarchy, negotiation will occur to ensure various groups can maximize their access to resources, and that decisions can be made by those closest to the decision who have the relevant expertise, interest, and information. The latter point of view also requires recognizing the skills needed in decision-making are developed over time and that mistakes can and will occur.

In education, those involved directly at the delivery level have greater expertise and are closer to the problems and the consumers than are the superintendents. This theme was repeated by the superintendents in this study and they felt that using the expertise of others to identify problems and potential solutions was not only desirable, it was a necessity. However, this necessity was governed by faith--faith held by these superintendents in the abilities of others to make appropriate decisions commensurate with their skills and authority and commensurate with appropriate accountability mechanisms.

While these superintendents did not formally discuss managing and exercising leadership in a school system and in schools characterized as managerially loose but culturally tight, they recognized that the fragmented nature of the school system required them to be orchestrators, managing the diverse and fragmented interests of others such that they may be directed to accomplish broad organizational goals and much more specific organizational objectives. As the school system has become more diverse and complex, and as authority and responsibilities have become more diverse and incapable of direction from one individual, these superintendents recognized they have less ability to affect others through direction and control.

Notwithstanding their limited ability to control and direct in an active fashion, these superintendents felt they must still assume overall responsibility for the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational organization. By setting, usually in a consultative fashion, the jurisdiction's goals and objectives, the superintendents helped others to achieve high performance in providing service to students. However, it is also important to recognize that the overall mission or goals of the system were determined, largely, by the times in which they were developed. Thus, they too changed to reflect emerging realities. Changing goals and objectives required flexibility for these superintendents, but the overall mission, which served to unite the efforts of others, was still be the overriding source of strategic and tactical planning decisions.

While it can be stated that these superintendents were influenced by pragmatism, and by the vagaries of changing times and circumstances, these superintendents communicated to others, through their actions, what they and, by extension, the school system stood for.

Superintendents spoke of the necessity for developing annual objectives and priorities for themselves and the school system to measure of the progress made, perhaps because of the emphasis of Alberta Education in this area. However, they were also aware that in setting objectives for others, a chain of reactions was set off, often based on the self-interests of others. Periodically, this self-interest was counter to the best intentions of the superintendents and their school systems. As a consequence, negotiating the specific objectives became a critical activity such that there was a mutual commitment to the objectives.

John's story illustrated the necessity for building agreements to achieve commitment to rather than achieving compliance with objectives set for an individual or sub-unit in the system. Through this negotiation and agreement building process, consensus and teamwork emerged, flexibility was achieved, and individual initiative recognized. In this manner, strategy was not reduced to a specific formula and the human elements such as morale, leadership, individual knowledge, and the ability to exercise discretion were not only respected, they were viewed as essential components of effectiveness. Hence, these superintendents did not simply develop and analyze strategies; they assisted others in analyzing information and making decisions by managing the overall context in which those decisions were made.

Political leadership for these superintendents was also achieved by negotiating structural or systemic changes within the organization. Those who exercised effective political leadership through this strategy not only recognized the "stakes" for the other parties involved; they also recognized secondary effects for those individuals. Thus, there was a need for significant information about the values, personalities, and preferences of others. The superintendents looked for approaches to maximize support and minimize resistance and, at times, pragmatism, as evidenced though identifying solutions which were satisfactory (i.e., the best that can be obtained at this time) rather than the best, was as important to them as their principles.

These superintendents chose to use what was best for students as the maxim for evaluating decisions they and others had made. Negotiated settlements with others tended to model what was to come: Principles were reflected in the negotiated settlements which served as precedents for future problem-solving in similar areas. Conflict was recognized as counterproductive rather than energizing, generally destructive rather than constructive, and led to winners and losers. Again, the maxim for evaluating decisions and negotiated settlements must be stated: Actions taken and decisions made must reflect what was best for students. On this point, there seemed to be no negotiation for the superintendents.

These superintendents placed considerable emphasis on the process of issue resolution--almost as much as upon the substance of the issues involved. For them, leadership was determined, to a large extent, by their vision, negotiations with multiple parties, adjustments to changing times and circumstances, and the degree to which others could be influenced by their actions and vision.

Rationality was one aspect of the leadership dilemma. These superintendents demonstrated another philosophical orientation to their own leadership--a philosophical orientation wherein leadership was values driven. It was this component which provided the balance between the need for consensus, negotiation, building agreements and seeking to accomplish that which was deemed to be most worthwhile through the most appropriate methods.

These superintendents did not overlook either the political dimension of the school system nor the political issues in the system. Analyzing the stories showed that political issues tended to those focus on process and, at times, these process concerns overshadowed the necessity for substance in the school system--what the system was all about, what it sought to do, and the importance placed on the individuals in that system and those on the outside who interacted with it. Perhaps the best illustration of this concern occurred in the story of James where politics--how things were done--were more important then the overall goal of effecting system change to benefit students. While James' story was illustrative of the conflict which can occur in this area, others, including Henry, Leonard, John, George, Peter, Luke, and Thomas experienced conflicts which differed only in terms of severity from James.

All these superintendents recognized that leadership had to be viewed as mobilizing others to accomplish higher purposes than those attributed to simple self-interest. They knew that their actions and beliefs had to be used to gain commitment from others. Hence, they provided a focus, and demonstrated energy and creativity in the work they did. In addition, they recognized that more was involved in leadership than ensuring simple contractual exchanges were provided to others to obtain a service in return for some extrinsic reward. They went beyond providing extrinsic rewards and focused on intrinsic areas: creativity; exercising initiative and discretion; recognition for work done; problem-solving and decision-making; pride; and accomplishment. They felt that meeting these intrinsic needs provided for superior performance and commitment to the work being done. This constituted a part of values-driven leadership.

Another aspect of values-driven leadership was addressed in the findings in the first theme: The educational system operates much like a family or a community where norms, values, expectations, unwritten rules, and relationships are communicated to others in a developmental fashion. These beliefs revolved around relationships between people and they had a sense of moral character--treating others right because as individuals, they should expect no less. Values exhibited by the superintendents thus influenced the behaviour of others, particularly as others strove to achieve the mission of the school system.

The behaviour of these superintendents set a moral tone for the education system and reinforced its primary aims. Nowhere was this action seen more clearly than in the decisions the superintendents made or in the decisions others were encouraged and supported to make. Decisions had to reflect the basic values of the individual and of the organization. Both Lyons (1991) and Follett (1927, 1932) advocated this philosophy.

These superintendents also had to rely on the educational system itself and its aims to engender a sense of loyalty and commitment from others such that the institution itself was worthy of support from others. In effect, this values-added leadership was transformational leadership and values such as trust, integrity, fairness, and respect for the individual were demonstrated to improve communication, decision-making, relationships with others, and evaluation of individuals and services provided.

Commitment underpinned the resolution of difficulties and problems which arise in the normal course of events. Developing and maintaining this commitment was predicated upon articulating and inculcating a higher sense of purpose for the education system--what it was all about, what principles guided its operations, and what unique contribution it could make to the education of students. What was critical about the fundamental philosophy built on values was that the values and the mission were shared. Common purpose was viewed as the way to win out over self-interest.

Beliefs reflected an order of preference and importance: The students and the parents were to derive service from the employees and the system. The values in both the mission statement and the education system's operations were defended by the superintendents and rarely did they delegate this responsibility to others. However, they certainly wished the values they held would be emulated, respected, and used by others in their own decision-making and problem-solving.

Values were present in the management and structural characteristics of the school system. In regard to the notion of decentralized decision-making, values were extremely evident. Local initiative was fostered, bureaucratic rule-following was discouraged, and the fair and just treatment of staff and students were expected. The rationale behind such an approach was relatively obvious: If others in the educational enterprise shared the values articulated by these superintendents and as reflected in the mission statement and general objectives for the system, decisions made by others would reflect those values. Further, the self-interest, expressed predominately by one major group in the enterprise--the teachers--may be subsumed or at least lessened as they too attempted to serve students in the best possible ways.

This did not mean however, that the values and feelings of groups--even teachers who follow their association's positions--were not respected or viewed with a degree of empathy. It did mean that these values could not be the focal point for the educational system--it had to serve a higher purpose and this higher purpose had to be communicated by the actions of the superintendent.

These superintendents also wrestled over the question as to what extent they had to be visibly seen or have a high profile in values-driven leadership. For some, it was less important to be involved in incidents where significant value issues came to the fore than to have developed the capacity in others to use values similar to theirs and adopted within the organization. While not present, their presence was felt.

These superintendents established a direction which others chose to follow. They made clear statements about what they wanted for the school system and communicated this to others to the extent that this desired state was internalized by others who did the work in the school system, providing the services for which the system exists. They felt a tremendous ownership to effect, in the strongest and most positive sense possible, the affairs of the system. In effect, their system became an extension of themselves, reflecting what they believed and viewed as most important.

Finally, these superintendents recognized that espousing ideals, while necessary, was not necessarily sufficient to ensure they are adopted and used by others as a basis for their own actions. Decisions made and problems solved had to demonstrate, or model those fundamental beliefs, values, and ideals.

These superintendents frequently expressed concerns over the degree to which self interest motivated particular groups as they tried to derive greater advantages from their association with the school system. While this was recognized as a constraint, it did not colour the attitudes of the superintendents to such a degree that directive leadership had to be employed to force others to bend to the will of the Board and the superintendent.

Rather, the superintendents chose to exercise political leadership in developing commonly held mission statements and priorities for the system which then were used as the basis for resisting self-interest. Seeking commitment rather than compliance was the rationale behind such a leadership practice. In this view, superintendents sought to create an institution of learning rather than maintaining an organization in which learning was to take place. Both Sergiovanni (1991) and Bernstein (1959) commented on this transformational process.

The literature was replete with the nature and difficulties associated with the dichotomous roles superintendents were increasingly forced to adopt in today's educational environment. While political leadership assisted superintendents in coping with these multiple roles, the other remaining leadership styles--values-driven and directive--assisted superintendents even more. Rather than choosing to actively control and direct the educational enterprise, superintendents influenced both the Board and others and relied, to a great extent, on their own credibility and competence for the legitimation of this influence.

Superintendents also recognized, as Sergiovanni (1991) noted, that schools are managerially loose but culturally tight and that the time they had to control the system was such that it would not be a success even if they tried. While this realization could be attributed purely and simply to pragmatism and consequentialism, higher order values were also involved. Again, the concept of integrity was a prime consideration for operating in a decentralized, collaborative mode. The superintendents reciprocated faith put in them by others by putting faith in others as well.

Directive leadership, that shown by advocating for and standing for that which is important, also assisted superintendents in their management and leadership activities. Coleman and LaRocque (1988) identified the creation of a positive climate in the school system as one of the determinants of system performance and the study findings conclusively have pointed out the necessity of this as well.

Personal Reflections

As a former superintendent, I was not surprised at the issues raised by the superintendents who participated in this study. However, the opportunity to discuss these issues in depth and to further analyze their responses to issues, were particularly useful in helping me to reexamine my own understanding of superintendent decision-making and problem-solving. More importantly, the values they held in doing both were particularly revealing and, in most cases, reaffirmed by own beliefs that there had to be substance in all that was done rather than paying an inordinate amount of attention to process.

The questions posed at the outset of the study were very personal since they were issues I had wrestled with during my time as a superintendent and during the time I worked in a district office with other superintendents. With respect to the importance of values, I found that the superintendents' values played a significant role in the development of system priorities for each superintendent who participated in the study. While the involvement of the superintendent in the development of the mission statement and priorities varied from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, there was little doubt that the influence of the superintendent's beliefs was seen in each one. Not only did superintendent values play an integral part in the substance of those mission statements and system priorities, they also played a major role in determining the process by which they were developed.

Which values were most important? First, the system existed to serve the clients of the school system. As a consequence, the provision of services to students was seen as the overriding consideration in these documents. Secondly, superintendents also expressed, in every instance, a necessity for providing quality services in a time of reduced fiscal resources. Thus, accountability and fiscal responsibility were also reflected in the documents. Finally, superintendents recognized the value of involving others in the process of developing the mission and priorities such that commitment to both would be the norm and compliance the exception. Process and substance were paramount considerations but these superintendents did not allow process to dictate substance. I was extremely pleased that they were not prepared to sacrifice their beliefs in the value of education nor to allow self-interest to become paramount to communitarian good.

Working in the political domain, especially with trustees, has been and still is an area for my personal growth. I was particularly interested in how these superintendents coped with the exigencies of the politicians serving on the Board of Trustees. I found that one of the primary methods for determining actions in the school systems was the mission statement, which served to unite all in pursuit of a common purpose. In effect, it served as the justification for actions taken, even those actions involving the disciplining of staff and their potential termination of contract. In every instance, the mission statement for the system was debated by members of the teaching staff, the trustees, and parent and community groups. In the hope that consensus could be reached, which it invariably was, consensus was to serve as the unifying force, thus institutionalizing a set of beliefs.

Superintendents spoke of the necessity of building agreements in all aspects of the school system. By actively involving others in the debate, by listening to the opinions of others, respecting the values of others, and by maintaining a focus on the *raison d'être* of the school system, agreements were built to proceed on courses of action.

At the Board level, superintendents took great pains to provide as much information as possible to assist the trustees in formulating decisions. Consistent with this information giving, superintendents provided written recommendations for action based on the information provided, an assessment of alternatives, and their own values and beliefs. The degree of trust these superintendents had in the Board and the Board in them was a requisite for their success and none would take actions which would diminish this trust. Whether this came about because of their wish to survive as superintendents or because they were operating from higher principles, or both is moot.

I was also provided with some excellent insights as to how superintendents resolved value conflicts in their school systems. First, superintendents clearly articulated and modeled a set of values and beliefs such that others would know and be able to predict where the superintendent "was coming from" on most issues. Secondly, these superintendents actively pursued harmonious relationships with the partners of the education system. The degree to which the relationships were either good or bad often determined the frequency of issues arising and the severity of those issues. Thirdly, they had a highly developed "nose" for anticipating problems before they become problems. Anticipating and confronting problems allowed for an early resolution of issues.

Fourth, the superintendents were not adverse to asking for assistance on delicate issues, particularly those involving issues in which they may not have tremendous expertise. Involving the Department of Education, often in an evaluative or consultative capacity, was deemed advantageous for developing recommendations for action. Fifth, they praised frequently, stretched strengths, and attempted to "steer rather than row". Sixth, superintendents allowed for and actively encouraged the exercise of discretion by others who were in positions to make decisions closest to the impact of the decisions. Finally, superintendents acted in a manner which always reflected integrity (a sense of wholeness), sincerity, concern and caring for others, honesty, trust, and a willingness to take a stand on issues where process may appear to win out over substance.

Despite the exigencies of time and place and the prevalent notions of situational or contingent management and leadership styles, I found these superintendents stood for more than what was right for the time. Good and right invariably reflected, in descending order of importance, doing what was in the best interest of students, deeply held personal and professional values, especially those in regard to relationships with others, and management of the school system including, but not limited to use of fiscal and human resources and accountability. Superintendents stressed the importance of their religious beliefs, which they used, both consciously and unconsciously, in assessing their own behaviours.

I was also pleased, perhaps because it confirmed my own basic leadership beliefs, that these superintendents paid due and careful consideration to the process of seeking the involvement of others in making decisions and developing plans for the school system. While it was seen to be desirable to involve others, a number of superintendents stressed the importance of ensuring those involved have competence, expertise, and a direct relevance to the issue at hand. Thus, judging for relevance, expertise, and competency are critical prior to commencing the consultative process.

A further area involving judgment also emerged from the study findings: Timing the introduction of changes and the pace at which the changes are implemented may either facilitate or impair the adoption and commitment to the changes. More importantly, the superintendent must decide whether the change would be of greater benefit to the students, to those who provide services, and to the system as a whole than present practices.

Perhaps the single largest action these superintendents took to realize the attainment of values in the school system is the agreement building process. Inherent in the agreement building process was the notion of negotiations and conflict resolution, both critical components of seeking commitment rather than compliance.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study has provided a significant number of areas which are deserving of further research and inquiry:

1. The agreement building process was deemed to be critically important in determining not only the success of the school system, but also of the superintendent. A number of superintendents participating in this study could be potentially classified as

experts in this process and have identified a number of critical areas in which significant agreements have been built. In an era of declining fiscal resources, coupled with increased expectations, school systems will be forced to make major agreements with all stakeholders. It is suggested that an ethnographic study be conducted to further analyze the agreement building process in those school systems deemed to have successfully adapted to the changing economic times through building agreements with the staff, the parents, and the Board.

2. Relationships are viewed as the key to building trust, commitment, collaboration, and common purpose. Accordingly, it is suggested that further study be undertaken to compare and contrast relationship building in a number of areas to more fully determine underlying values and philosophies inherent in successful relationships. This may prove to be especially important in relationships between the superintendent and the Board, as this study has clearly pointed out.

3. Hodgkinson (1983) frequently commented on the necessity for viewing administration as "philosophy in action". However, no one has yet thought to ask administrators the degree to which philosophical orientations have an effect on administrative actions. While this study has attempted to probe the axiological nature of the Chief Executive Officer, little research has been conducted in the areas of defining the ontological reality in which the Chief Executive Officer operates. The changing fiscal reality faced by educational administrators requires more thoughtful and prolonged analysis such that others may learn from the processes by which reality is defined and acted upon by the superintendents of schools.

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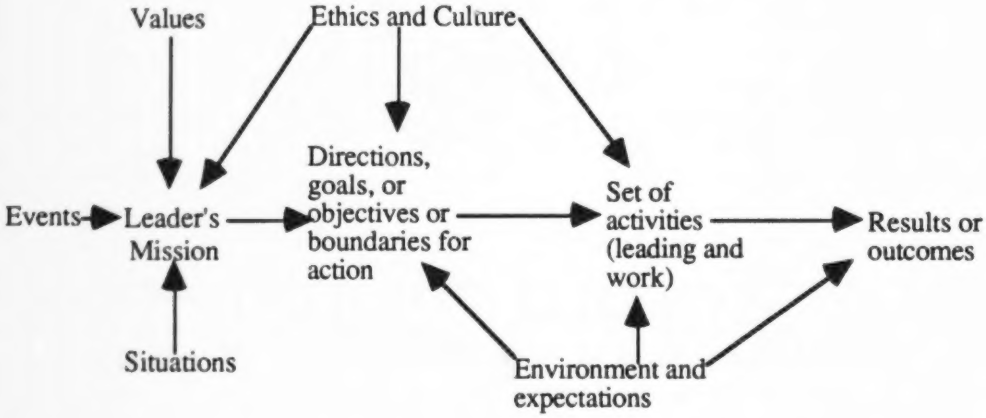
Appendix "A"

Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I'd like to take this opportunity to make you aware of the nature of the study and the methods to be used to gather data. The focus of the study is to understand, by gathering some stories of your experiences, how values, ethics, and morals affect the decision-making and problem-solving of superintendents of schools as they exercise leadership in their school systems.

Immegart (1988) has developed a conceptualization or a model of leadership which shows his views about the influence of values, morals, and ethics on leadership. I'd like to give you a copy of this model to structure your thoughts prior to formally beginning the interview questions. The model is as follows:


Values
Ethics and Culture
Events
Leader's Mission
Directions, goals, or objectives or boundaries for action
Set of activities (leading and work)
Results or outcomes
Situations
Environment and expectations

Model of a Broad Conceptualization of Leadership

From: Immegart, G.L. (1988). ***Leadership and leader behavior. In N.J. Boyan (Ed.), Handbook of research on educational administration: A project of the American Educational Research Association.*** New York: Longman.

The interview questions will focus upon differing aspects of the model, but particularly upon the beliefs, values, mission, ethics, and goals to which you ascribe. When responding to the questions, I would like you to describe some situations in which you have experienced conflict, both internally and externally, in a positive or a negative sense, over vision, values, ethics, objectives, and mission.

Appendix "A" (continued)

Before we begin the formal questions relating to the study, I would like you to provide some basic demographic information to assist me in the final analysis of the data.

1. **How large is the school system in which you work?**
2. **How long have you served in this capacity?**
3. **What are your educational qualifications?**

As I mentioned earlier, the study is attempting to determine how values, ethics, and beliefs influence the decision-making and problem-solving activities of the superintendent of schools. The following questions have been designed to provide insights into these areas. Where possible, I would very much appreciate it if you could amplify some of the responses with anecdotes or examples. The questions are:

1. What is important to you in your personal and professional life?

2. What professional goals do you have which may be separate from your personal goals? To what extent do your personal and professional goals coincide?

3. Do you have any particular objectives which you wish to accomplish during your tenure as superintendent? What stimulated your decisions in regard to this mission? To what extent is your mission reflected in the priorities for your school system?

4. When the system priorities were developed, did you experience any conflict with other stakeholders over the nature and number of the system priorities? Please describe the nature of the conflict, the causes of the conflict, and how the conflicts were resolved?

5. What are the circumstances which cause you stress or pressure in complying with specific directions with which you may disagree? How would you respond to those circumstances? Can you give examples when this may have occurred?

6. Can you describe any instances when you have experienced any conflicts between your own personal beliefs and what the job requires of you? How did you feel when those conflicts occurred? How did you resolve them?

Appendix "A" (continued)

7. Have you ever felt uncomfortable with your use of power, either of a discretionary, influential, or legitimate nature, to accomplish your own and the system objectives? Can you provide examples? How do you balance the demands for involvement of others in decision-making while still remaining in control of the operation of the school system? Can you provide examples when conflict has arisen over the demands for involvement of others and control?

8. What aspects of your role provide you with the most satisfaction? On the other hand, which aspects of your role provide you with the least amount of satisfaction? Can you please explain your reasons?

9. Please describe how you seek agreement and support from the stakeholders in the school system, especially at the political level (i.e., Board of Trustees). When you sense resistance from some stakeholders, how do you manage the resistance and why do you feel that the chosen management strategy works? Can you provide an example to illustrate this resolution?

10. What are the most important aspects of your own decision-making style? In your tenure as a superintendent, can you think of a most important or crucial decision which you had to make in either the policy, personnel, or financial area? Please outline this crucial decision and describe how you came to do what you did? What were the outcomes of this decision and how did you assess the rightness of the decision?

11. Policy and the policy process are heavily imbued with values, biases, and expectations which can often result in conflict. Can you describe any significant policy conflicts which you have experienced? What were the causes of the conflict? How was/were the conflict(s) resolved? How did you assess the rightness of the resolution?

12. Do you have any questions at this time or is there anything else which you would like to add?

Please accept my sincere thanks for your cooperation, your time, and your frankness.

Appendix "B"

Participant Contact Letter

#23 Brookside Avenue,
Spruce Grove, AB.
T7X 1B6.
August 25, 1992.

Dear :

During the 1991-92 year, I have been enrolled in a Doctoral program in Educational Administration at the University of Alberta. Having completed the necessary course work, the Ethics Review, and the Doctoral Candidacy, I am now ready to turn my attention to conducting the research associated with my topic area. As with all research, those conducting it must seek participants to provide data. At the outset, I would like to ask you to be one of the participants in the study since the focus of the research revolves around the superintendent and the work that the superintendent does. Some further information may assist you in making a decision whether or not to participate.

The study is designed to probe the value base of superintendents and the roles that these values play in superintendent decision-making and problem solving. Values are defined as those fundamental beliefs which serve to provide direction to people and which reflect concepts of morality, ethics, and relationships with others. Often, when superintendents put their individual values into practice, they may experience conflict within themselves or with others who espouse differing values. Essentially then, conflict can result from different expectations about "doing things right" or "doing the right things". In this basic conundrum lies the essence of my study: What values serve to guide decision-making and problem solving of the superintendent and how are value conflicts which the superintendent experiences resolved?

To acquire data relative to these questions, I propose to use the interpretive research method which will consist of an interview format and a document analysis. This format has been selected since the topic of the study does not easily lend itself to an empirical study via questionnaires. The interviews will normally last two hours and will be tape recorded to allow for the transcription of the interview and the subsequent analysis of data. Beyond the interview with each participant, I would appreciate examining documents which relate to the broad directions, plans, and priorities for the school system. These documents will also form the basis for part of the interview, especially in regard to the value base which is reflected both in the substance of the documents and in the process which was used to develop the documents.

With some participants, it will be necessary to conduct a second interview to seek clarification of issues, topics, views, and behaviors which emerged from the data analysis of the first interview. I anticipate that the second interview will take no longer than two hours. Like the first interview, the conversation will be tape recorded to facilitate transcription and data analysis. Prior to the second interview being conducted, I would propose to send you a copy of the transcripts of the first interview to allow you to refresh your memory about both the particular comments and incidents and the context in which they were offered.

.../2

Appendix "B"

Participant Contact Letter

-2-

Other information to assist you in making a decision to participate includes:

1. All research will be governed by the Ethics of Research as developed by the University of Alberta. In light of these Ethics, participants are guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity and any comments which are excerpted from the interview data for use in the Dissertation will be attributed to a pseudonym known only to the researcher;
2. You may, at any time, decide to opt out of the study despite your initial agreement to participate;
3. A copy of the Ethics Review Application and the signed approval are included in this package for your information;
4. The general timelines for the study provide for the initial interviews to take place in September. I recognize that this time is an especially hectic one for superintendents, and I am fully prepared to meet with you outside of regular work hours and at a place other than your work site. Arrangements can be made to suit your schedule and your commitments;
5. Should you determine, after examining and reflecting upon the transcribed data, that an incident which was described might be potentially damaging, you may exercise the right to have any reference to that data deleted from the data analysis and the reporting of the data;
6. A signed guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity will be provided to you;
7. An executive summary of the final Dissertation will be provided to you in recognition of your assistance.

I have taken the liberty of including two copies of a Letter of Intent to Participate in this package for your signature. It would be greatly appreciated if you would return one Letter of Intent to me by September 15 along with a tentative time when you feel we could get together for the initial interview. A postage paid envelope has been included for your convenience. Please retain one copy for your own records. If you require any further information to assist you in making a decision, please do not hesitate to call me at 962-1432 in the evenings or at 427-8217 (Alberta Education, Policy and Planning Branch) during the day.

It is my sincere hope that you will assist me in conducting my study. Your help is most certainly needed. I look forward to meeting with you in the very near future.

Sincerely yours,

Terrence (Terry) J. Wendel.

Enclosure

Appendix "C"

Ethics Review Document

Description of Project and Procedures
for Observing Ethical Guidelines
(PLEASE TYPE)

Short Title: The Values of Superintendents and the Influence of Those Values on Superintendent Problem-Solving and Decision-Making. Applicant: Terrence J. Wendel

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to determine the role that values play in the decision-making and problem-solving activities of Alberta school system superintendents.

Methodology: To acquire data relative to the topic, a series of semi-structured interviews will be held with between seven and 10 practicing superintendents of schools . The interview will provide a means for exploring and gathering experiential material which can provide a resource for developing an understanding of the phenomenon of values and also will provide an avenue to secure deeper meaning of those experiences. Documents relating to the establishment of priorities for the school system will be examined and will be used for a discussion of values which underlie the priorities.

The interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed and analyzed for emergent themes. All participants in the first set of interviews will be provided with the opportunity to review the transcripts and the analysis if they so wish. From the analysis of the first set of interviews, it is proposed that a second set of interviews be held with those participants (3-5) who have provided the richest material. These interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed to facilitate exegetical analysis.

Nature of Involvement of Human Participants: Study participants will be requested to participate in one, and possibly a second, interview. Those who wish to receive a copy of the interview transcript and the thematic analysis of the transcript will be provided with the material. Those participants selected for the second interview will be provided with transcripts and thematic analysis.

Are underage or "captive" participants involved? NO

Appendix "C" (continued)

Ethics Revirew Document

-2-

Please describe clearly the specific procedures for observing the University of Alberta ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

1. Explaining purpose and nature of research to participants:

   Superintendents will be identified from a listing of the members of Zones 2, 3, and 4 of the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) obtained from the Executive Director of CASS. A letter will be sent to selected participants by the researcher and will:

   1. Explain the nature of the study and the general procedures to be followed in the conduct of the study.
   2. Explain the projected time requirements for the interviews.
   3. Contain a request for documents related to the plans and priorities for the school system.
   4. Request the participation of the candidate in the study and an indication of willingness to participate by the return of a Letter of Intent to Participate.
   5. Explain the procedures related to the Ethics of Research as per University of Alberta guidelines and the concomitant guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity of participants in human science research.
   6. Explain the timelines for the research activities and their involvement in subsequent interpretation and reporting of the data.

2. Obtaining informed consent of participants:

   All participants will be asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the study by returning a signed Letter of Intent to Participate to the researcher. Should further information be required by the potential participant before informed consent is given, the individual will be invited to speak with the researcher and/or the advisor.

3. Providing for exercising the right to opt out:

   All participants will be advised in the initial contact letter that if they agree to participate, they are free to opt out of the study at any time. Further, the Letter of Intent to Participate will contain a clause which acknowledges awareness of the participant to opt out of the study at any time.

Appendix "C" (continued)

Ethics Review Document

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4. Addressing anonymity and confidentiality issues:

   All participants will be guaranteed both confidentiality and anonymity. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym which will be used in quoting responses. Data analysis will not reflect the names of personnel, jurisdiction, or other parties involved in critical incidents or issues related to values, value conflicts,and the resolution of those value conflicts. The researcher will provide a signed guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity to all participants.

5. Avoiding threat or harm to participants or others:

   All participants will be assigned a pseudonym which will be used in data analysis and in the reporting of data. Data analysis and reporting will be devoid of any names of personnel, participants, or locations. Should any participant, upon reflecting on the transcribed data, feel that an incident which was described might be potentially damaging, the participant may exercise the right to have any reference to that incidence deleted from both the data analysis and the reporting of the data.

6. Other procedures relevant to observing ethical guidelines not described above (e.g., training assistants directly involved in data collection):

   None.

APPLICANT: Please submit the completed application form
together with a copy of the research proposal
to the Department Chairman's Office.

When the application has been reviewed, a copy of the
form will be returned to the applicant. The copy of
the proposal will be retained on file.

Appendix "D"

Letter of Intent to Participate

LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DOCTORAL RESEARCH

To: Terrence J. Wendel,
#23 Brookside Avenue,
Spruce Grove, Alberta.

Please be advised that I, ________________________________ do hereby agree to participate in your Doctoral Research Project entitled **"The Values of Superintendents and the Influence of Those Values on Superintendent Problem-Solving and Decision-Making".** This agreement is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. That the research is to be conducted as per the Ethics of Research as developed by the University of Alberta and as per the material found within the approved Ethics Review Application which has been appended to your letter of request. Specifically, the following points are germane to this approval:

(a) As a participant, I am guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity and any comments which are excerpted from the interview data for use in the Dissertation will be attributed to a pseudonym known only to the researcher;

(b) I may, at any time, decide to opt out of the study despite my initial agreement to participate;

(c) Arrangements for the interviews can be made to suit my schedule and commitments;

(d) Should I determine, after examining and reflecting upon the transcribed data, that an incident which was described might be potentially damaging, I may exercise the right to have any reference to that data deleted from the data analysis and the reporting of the data;

(e) Approval is given subject to the signed guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity noted at the bottom of this letter;

(f) An executive summary of the final Dissertation will be provided to me in recognition of my assistance in this research project;

(g) The interviews may be tape-recorded to facilitate transcription and data analysis;

(h) Copies of the transcribed data and thematic analysis will be provided to me as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the first interview and, if applicable, after the second interview.

Dated this ______ day of ____________, 1992 at ______________________

Signed:

____

Appendix "D" (continued)

Letter of Intent to Participate

GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

I, TERRENCE J. WENDEL, guarantee confidentiality and anonymity to ____________________________ with respect to interview data obtained while conducting research associated with a Doctoral Dissertation entitled "***The Values of Superintendents and the Influence of Those Values on Superintendent Problem-Solving and Decision-Making***" and that no reference will be made to location or jurisdiction in the attribution of excerpted responses. It is further guaranteed that any comments excerpted from interviews will be assigned a pseudonym and that the interviewee reserves the final right to approve the inclusion of excerpted data in the Doctoral Dissertation.

Dated this _____ day of ________ , 1992 at ______________________________ Alberta.

Signed:

____

Terrence (Terry) J. Wendel.

Appendix "E"

John's Story

The Setting

In John's lengthy tenure (more than 10 years) as superintendent of an urban public school district, significant problems have emerged in the areas of educational finance, communication with a number of interest groups, growth, the demands for accountability and results, balancing individual rights with communitarian good, and choosing broad educational goals to which the community as a whole can ascribe. Strong personal and spiritual beliefs serve as the foundation for the actions which John has taken in attempting to resolve these issues.

Personal and Professional Beliefs and Values

When asked about what was most important in his personal and professional life, John indicated he has struggled with this question, and will continue to struggle with this question, for most of his personal and professional life. Identifying family as the most crucial value in his personal life, he became more expansive in terms of professional values:

> Some of the things that I've discovered about myself, and there are probably a lot that I don't know, is that certainly family is a very important value. Doing the work in a good way, doing a good job is an important value. Doing the right things right is a value. It's very important. (John, pp. 2-3)

Reconciling personal and professional obligations and aspirations was extremely important to John and he indicated that despite best efforts to reconcile these differing goals, conflicts can and do occur. However, he indicated superintendents cannot operate as if the two were discrete and separate realms which do not impact upon each other. Personally and professionally, John felt

> the goals mesh and the goals are reconciled. I think that in the superintendency, the personal goals that you have are certainly in conflict with family goals you have in terms of the time commitment. Obviously, the goals that you have at work are oriented toward the goals of public education, the Board policies, directives, and so forth. The work of the schools. Your family commitments are to people within that family. So, actually, there are two discrete items. But the

> way in which you deal in these realms should be essentially the same, doing with the same values. (John, pp. 7-8)

This process of reconciliation came early to John when he recognized that family must take precedence over his professional obligations. Making a role change from a teacher to a school-based administrator to that of the superintendency called for a rethinking of previous time commitments necessary to do a job and to spend on family activities:

> I was a pretty active teacher. But, doing a superintendent's job is just so much, far more demanding in terms of personal time. I think the best reconciliation of it was when I realized and decided that my family had to come before my job. If I ever placed my job before my family then I had the wrong priorities. But the way in which I was able to help my family understand that the family comes first is to talk to them about it. To help them understand that, okay, you are more important than the job, and that I've got this job to do and talk about the tasks and the jobs to be done and get their agreement that indeed, it was important to do this job. (John, pp. 7-8)

John noted he was never forced into making the difficult choice between family and the superintendency. Having secured family support for his position as superintendent and the recognition that the role would entail more time than either of those which he previously occupied, he was able to successfully balance the demands associated with both. However, he noted that if the demands could not have been reconciled, family would have won out over the superintendency. John spoke forcefully about this issue:

> [My family] supported me in it and said, "It's okay, you know. It's okay that you spend that time there." I don't think it was ever a conflict in my mind to that point because the Board wouldn't see what's happening within myself. But, I would think that the Board would realize, that when it comes to personal values, the family would come before the job. But, if it ever comes to the point where the job interferes with family, or family interferes with the job, then I'll start looking for a different job. If I can't make the two work together, then I've got to find another job. My family understands that too. (John, p. 8)

John frequently mentioned the importance of doing the right things right in the interview and he felt success was largely determined by the degree to which solutions could be found for problems:

> Success is a value and being successful to me means finding solutions to problems. When we're dealing with problems, it means designing systems that will work. It means implementing systems that will work. It means doing the job right. Doing the right things right. (John, p. 3)

Success and satisfaction were highly related for John and satisfaction came largely from working with others to build, shape, and share agreements in matters as diverse as setting directions for the school system, evaluation of personnel, developing policies, and the resolution of conflicts:

> I think success was making agreements, and when I make an agreement I feel good; when I'm searching for it I feel bad. Where we're scrambling, we're scrapping, we're parrying, we're debating, we're weighing, we're discussing--all of that is unsettling. When you get it all together and you tie up the agreement, whether it's a small one individually, or a big one, whatever it is, certainly at that point in time you feel good. There's a bit of a high that you get out of it. (John, p. 19)

John also derived satisfaction from another source:

> But the other one, I think, is seeing kids in a school. I just love to go to the school and see the kids. I'm such a softy about it that it makes me choke up sometimes. Really, when you see these little guys reading with all their heart or just putting all into it, doing a good job, that's the one that really makes me feel good. (John, p. 20)

Essentially for John, "satisfaction came from doing the work and doing the work well" (John, p. 20). Remaining positive was also important, although he admitted to feeling anxiety in some new situations:

> I probably work in that realm (i.e., being positive) more than I do in the realm of the dissatisfiers. I choose not to be dissatisfied. I choose not to get into that area. I certainly have anxieties. Whenever I do something new, I'm probably scared half to death to start with, so consequently, I'm scared half to death most of the time, I guess, because most of what I do is new even though you've been through it before. You go into a new setting, you're looking for the solution, you're trying to set the goal. So you approach it and you're scared, kind of anxious about it. That would be a source of anxiety, but it's not a source of dissatisfaction. In terms of being dissatisfied, I've chosen not to let that become my life. (John, p. 20)

Doing the right things right, within the political context, was crucial for John and he found that making judgments about the rightness of actions was based on beliefs in the political and democratic processes, commonly held objectives and goals or the school district, collaboration, and extensive communication with various stakeholders:

> I think in terms of my job, if you look at the superintendent as the CEO, implementing the policies of the Board, then the justification for an action generally comes from the fact that you've got a Board that says this is the right thing to do. You've got a policy, a policy that represents the public will and in public education we are essentially implementing the public will and we do it through the electoral process where we get trustees who develop policies. The

> policies, the goals for the schools, the objectives, the priorities, all of these come through our school board. It's done, I think, in a collaborative sense. We involve members of staff in the schools through our school principals. We involve the community through various communications with advisory groups and so forth. But, in the end, it's the Board that sets the policies which they think is the right thing to do. So, the goals are set in that way. (John, p. 3)

When probed further about personal and professional values, John emphasized honesty, integrity, the importance of relationships, even within the political context, vision, commitment, consistency, and advocacy for education. John also recognized the importance of modeling these fundamental beliefs and values in his actions and that this modeling was a crucial determiner in his own evaluation of his success as a superintendent. Recognizing this was a difficult thing to do, John expanded upon his practice and how beliefs were demonstrated in his practice:

> I think that's really a difficult thing to do. I think it's a feeling you have and probably beliefs you have. Where you develop these beliefs in terms of honesty, integrity, treating the other person, you know, the Golden Rule: treating them the way you would want to be treated and so forth. Openness. I don't just have a listing myself. (John, p. 6)

When asked how these beliefs were modeled in his practice, John noted he had been recently reading and reflecting upon this issue:

> These are some of the things that I think are true. If you think in terms of behavior and things that I would value: Behaves ethically; has interpersonal skills; you've got to be able to work with other people in such a way that you work successfully. That depends on good communication; it depends upon a vision. Ours in the school district. Helping students become the best they can be. A very simple way of saying helping each student to reach their potential but at the same time not losing sight of society that you're talking about. Not one at the expense of another. Keeping up on things. Being an advocate for education, the importance of education. Of course, in my work here, being an advocate of public education. Being sensitive to others. Being consistent. There's a whole host of things that come out of here.
>
> In the area of values: integrity; honesty; hard work; family; teamwork; sincerity. All of those things fit into there. And, I suppose, how do you model them? Well, you try to live that way and so that's the way you are. You've got try to be that kind of a person. And being human, you never are what you think you ought to be. You never achieve that goal but that doesn't make the goal wrong. It just means that you didn't do it! When you make those mistakes, you apologize to people for making it and you let them know however, that was not your intent. Your intent was to do the right thing and to do it in the right possible way. So, I guess that's more of the values area. (John, pp. 6-7)

For John, the orientation in finding something which would work must be related to overarching goals and mission. These served as the basis of the agreements reached between and among the various groups seeking to advance their own interests through the political process. John also recognized people believe what they are led to believe and likened this to the Biblical reference to raising children. Leading was strongly related to the mission statement developed for his school jurisdiction. John also recognized the importance of morality in exercising leadership and assessing the rightness of actions taken. He spoke of a strong religious faith as the basis of his morality, but recognized his particular faith could not be advanced in the context of the public school system:

> Oh, yes, morality is there; assessing rightness of it. And for myself, personally, it'll come through religion. Oh, sure, yes, I'm a church person, and my family is too, and that's a basis of morality for me, no question about it. But in terms of the superintendent's job, I can't use a denominational interest; it has no place in it, because if you put one denomination before another within a public-school system, you're really not serving the public-school system. No, the ethics are there; they've got to stand. But I can't use my religion as the justification for it in my job. (John, p. 35)

Despite the fact John felt he could not use his denominationalism as the justification for his actions in the public school system, he felt it still provided a guide for his very fundamental beliefs. When asked if he acted in accordance with deeply held principles or because of pragmatism, John was very clear:

> That's an interesting one. I asked a grade seven kid of mine that years ago when I was teaching in a social studies class. He said, "You know, you have to do it because you believe it's right, not because of fear of consequences." Sure, all of them are part of me, but the most important one is that you do it because it's right. Oh, yes, it's principles, the deeply held principles. That has to be the justification for my behavior. But fear of consequences has to be another one, and pragmatism is another; it works. (John, p. 36)

While John indicated a belief in action being justified by deeply held principles, he also indicated his actions were governed, to a lesser extent, by consequences and pragmatism. However, he clearly ruled out preference as a basis for his actions: "No, I don't think it's simple preference. No, simple preference wouldn't be it. But the other three definitely, yes" (John, p. 36). When the interviewer advised John that the literature shows that over 80% of administrators choose to act from the bases of pragmatism, consequentialism, or collaboration, John indicated he was not surprised. However, he also indicated these were not the best ways to determine how administrators should choose to act:

> I think that's the wrong basis to work from, myself. I think being principled is the basis to work from in the end. We get into an awful lot of debates, and it really bothers me to hear people make a decision only because it'll work, it's the easy way out, or whatever. But at the same time if you argue that it's right and it's damaging somebody else, then it isn't right. It's really complicated. (John, p. 37)

John believed principles are religiously or spiritually based and for him, there was no conflict between his religious beliefs and his work and personal life: "I think those principles are normally religious or spiritually based. I think so. But I don't myself see a conflict between my religious beliefs and my work and my personal life. I don't have a conflict there" (John, p. 37). For John, successfully integrating spiritual and religious principles, consequences, and collaboration in his personal and professional life was very important and he indicated that he and all others would be answerable for this integration.

Belief that policy developed by the Board is "right" stemmed from John's view of the democratic process. Value judgments, in the area of policy, reflected the belief that since trustees have been elected by the body politic, decisions made by the board reflected the political will of the electorate:

> The value judgment comes from the democratic process. Each trustee will bring a different set of values. Each of them will be receiving input from different people in the community with different values and really, I guess, in a public setting, it's a social justification, essentially, of the goals. And, that's, I think, what the essence of democracy is that there are these things that are justified in that way. So that would be doing the right thing. (John, p. 4)

John was unequivocal in his belief that means and ends cannot be separately determined and that ethical actions must always guide the pursuit of the ends. In discussing methods of determining whether policy enacted by the Board was right, John commented that

> doing it right is making sure that it happens with that goal in mind. If you're moving towards that goal . . . and there I think, when you look at values and ethics, you do it in an ethical way. You think in terms that the end justifies the means--that by itself I don't think is true. (John, p. 4)

Unfortunately, John noted that today, in Canada generally, and in his community specifically, reconciling the rights and aspirations of the individual with those of the community was becoming a much more difficult process than ever before. John commented that individualism and collective well-being must work together if both are to be well served:

> So there are these values of honesty and you know, just the moral values that we have in our society. The mores that come through the religions that we have within the communities: the respect for the individual; the respect for the public will. Does the individual come before the group? I think that the two have to work together where you don't let one individual action work to the detriment of the general welfare and then, on the other hand, the general welfare shouldn't work to the detriment of the individual. (John, p. 4)

John noted that in the community in which he works, there is significant concern about the Young Offenders Act, its impact upon the well-being of the community, and the general perception that the rights of society are being sacrificed to the rights of the individual. Working in a partnership with a number of interest groups, social agencies, and other levels of government, school district personnel are attempting to address the problem. John noted the goals of the school system, in particular, and the goals of education for Alberta in general, emphasize the development of the individual such that the individual can make a contribution to society. While no examples could be given to illustrate a conflict between individual rights and the common good within his school jurisdiction, John commented

> I can't identify any specifics there but I raise that one [Young Offenders Act] because I think, as we look at the goals of education, we talk essentially about the ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of the individual in order to fulfill personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society. So, we're looking at both dimensions. (John, p. 5)

Balancing the achievement of individual aspirations and societal obligations was seen as a basis for assessing the rightness of decisions made by the school system. In response to the question of achieving a balance between these two extremes, John noted

> I think that's a goal that we try and assess decisions through. Are you going to expel a student for example? What's the benefit to the student and what's the impact on the rest of the student body? It's certainly one of the issues and you've

> got to look at both of them. Just as a screen that I think you have to use for decision-making. (John, p. 6)

Personal Objectives as Superintendent of Schools (Building Agreements)

John indicated his primary goal of success is no different today than it was when he first started as superintendent: "I don't think that there's anything that I want to do that's any different than when I started. Because, I think that when I started, the overall goal of achieving success is still the goal today" (John, p. 8). After stating past successes mean little in considering success in today's education systems, an admonishment was given that superintendents cannot rest on their laurels and hope success will come their way:

> Yesterday's successes don't mean anything today in terms of achieving success today. Each day, each day, you're on your own merits at that present point in time. You never get to the point where you rest on past laurels and say, "Well, that's going to stand me in good stead." Because, you're always going to be looking to the future in terms of the objectives that are there and the objectives you have are going to be changing. (John, pp. 8-9)

Cognizant of his own admonition for determining and acting upon objectives which represent changing times and needs, John strongly advocated for strategic planning, determining needs, consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders in the educational community, and budgeting to achieve objectives as primary obligations for his superintendency. When asked about the importance of changing to meet changing objectives, John indicated,

> [it is very important but] more so on an annual basis, in so far as the school district is concerned, because you're looking at an annual planning cycle. The strategic planning is done on an annual basis. We treat our budget as a strategic planning document. We just had a meeting with a couple of our school principals this morning in terms of their priorities and action plans for their schools. Building them all together and that rotates on an annual basis. So, the overriding objective of being successful, that hasn't changed. I don't have any grandiose plans to say, "There is this one thing however. If I could do that, then I'd rest happy!" (John, pp. 8-9)

For John, the superintendency was characterized by striving to develop the best school system possible given the constraints encountered in the context in which one works. Developing this "best" school system consisted of determining and addressing needs which exist within that school system. This process went far beyond simply identifying one crucial area and assuming past successes would guarantee achievement of the new objectives:

> What you do is assess the need, and on the basis of the assessment of the need you identify the need, you talk about whether or not indeed the need may be real, you get the stakeholders involved in assessing the need and determining whether it's real or not, whether or not it's a priority need, and you set goals on the basis of these priorities and then you strive to achieve those goals. And, we've basically got it built into an annual strategic planning model, an annual cycle with the budget, our budgeting process, at the very center of it. That's going to change all the time. (John, pp. 9-10)

Inherent in the strategic planning process is the multiplicity of needs, interests, goals, and wants of various interest groups. John noted conflicts arise when stakeholders have different visions, priorities, and objectives. He gave some examples of areas in which conflicts had occurred: integration of the mentally handicapped and other special needs children; native education; French Immersion Kindergarten programming; stakeholder groups from different school jurisdictions; and operating a school system on shrinking resources while attempting to meet a multiplicity of demands. John was philosophical about managing these diverse and often conflicting interests:

> We've got different roles and different expectations. So, there are some natural conflicts that are there. So, you start to bring this together. To a large extent, I've often described my job as one of building agreements. Consensus is part of it but you have to have the agreement and the agreement level varies according to the group that you're looking at. (John, p. 10)

Philosophically and pragmatically, the process of building agreements was crucial to John as he fulfilled the role of the superintendency. Not only were agreements with multiple stakeholders important to him, the process of building agreements was equally important, particularly in dealing with the political and policy processes of the Board of Trustees:

> All of our School Board meetings are derived at building agreements. We've got a policy handbook here that has a whole bunch of agreements. Every single policy is an agreement. The School Board has made an agreement that will be the policy direction that we will work on. And, that's by simple majority. Majority rules. (John, p. 10)

In dealing with field-based administrators, John used a similar strategy to build agreements, but he reserved the right to make the final decision if agreements could not be made:

> When I get our school principals together for principals' meetings, I work on a consensus model with the understanding that I hold the right to make the final decision. And, what I do is go at it with the school principals in a principals' meeting, look at all the issues, look at all the problems, let them talk themselves out to the point where I understand all of the problems that they see, all of the objections that they've got to it. Get it all out on the table. Get other people to show the other side of the issue. You work at it on a consensus basis and in time you find out that within that group there is an agreement that starts to emerge, that you see people start to throw in with. Then, as a group leader, I do the consensus statement and say, "Does this appear to be the answer that we're looking at?" and get a lot of silence. And then I try the statement that says, "I'll take silence to mean agreement unless you indicate to the contrary." There's all kind of little techniques that you get at to say okay, "We've built this agreement now." (John, pp. 10-11)

Although John noted he reserved the final right to make decisions, the frequency of exercising this right was

> not very often. Sometimes, when we have people who just don't come around in the time that we have available, then I talk to them privately (Laughter) later and we sort out the differences. And, if it's so bad that they can't live with it, I say, "Okay, we'll bring it back to the table and we'll have another go around on it". (John, p. 11)

Building agreements was a key plank in John's conflict resolution strategy. He stated that

> generally speaking, you can bring groups of people to build agreements. I can have somebody who is boiling mad with a complaint that's just boiling over against somebody else and they're scrapping and they will never, ever resolve it. I can bring the two of them into my office and I can help them find a way that they can build an agreement and set a goal for the future and walk out of here saying, "Okay this is what we're going to do", and agreeing to it. (John, p. 11)

John commented he was unsure whether he acted as a mediator or a facilitator because his role changed according to the situation in which he found himself:

> There are times when I force people like that to talk to me rather than talking to each other initially and maybe I'm a facilitator. Most often, the solution to that problem comes between them. Most often, I don't have the solution to the problem. Most often, the solution exists between the people in conflict. (John, p. 11)

Rather than being a solution-giver or imposing a solution, John felt the decision in a matter of conflict was better made by the parties to the conflict:

> Most often [the parties make their own decision]. Most often, that can happen if you approach it in the right way. We've got teachers that have worked in conflict with a school board policy or with a pedagogically sound approach. They didn't keep their marks the way they should and there's an appeal and you can't find it. They've pounded on kids where they shouldn't and so forth. There may be other teachers who may have been angry and mad at things that the Board has done and most often you can get hold of people like that, start to examine the problem, look at what ought to have happened, not dwell in the past, set the goals for the future, and you admonish them for it, and they walk out and thank you for helping them. "Thanks for giving me hell!" And they're relieved. (John, p. 11)

John's emphasis on building agreements and having others "throw in" and support the agreements were central to his philosophy of administration. He also believed this philosophy was reflected in his actions in a wide variety of instances. John spoke extensively of various agreements being formed with a number of interest groups, including the Board of Trustees. The building agreements theme was markedly evident in a lengthy excerpt from the interview. In this excerpt, John outlined a number of issues in which agreements have been reached:

> So, it's building agreements and we build so many agreements! Our school principals' meetings are agreements. We have this community agency. We built agreements with all the people around there as to what we're going to do. It's really a business of building agreements and where you find that you build an agreement in this little group and you've got another group here that you know doesn't, then you've got to make connections. You've got to make connections between groups and individuals! If you make those connections and build agreements and make it broader, I think consensus is stronger than simple majority, but it depends upon the body.
>
> If you're dealing with the School Board, majority rules. Obviously, it's a different influence. Even salary negotiations has to be building an agreement. It's an adversarial approach. It's a difficult one to work through. We always get trustees to act as spokesman. We spend a lot of time with them talking about what the objectives we're after. We build an agreement with the Board, to a large extent, as to what the goals are. But, ultimately, there has to be an agreement between our trustees and the negotiators of the teachers and we build an agreement. We talk about the fact that once we have a memorandum, then you're obligated to support it, and speak in favor of it, and make sure other that other people will do the same thing. (John, p. 12)

Making connections between differing groups and individuals was also seen to be central to the process of building agreements. In other words, broadening the base for the agreements was as important as was the agreement itself. John's role in this process was that of a facilitator as opposed to a negotiator, solution-giver, or an autocratic solution imposer. Noting his administrative style has never been that of a solution-giver, John related the recent literature on Total Quality Management to his own style of administration:

> If you look at all of that, I think you will find that the literature, more and more, is starting to illustrate that the autocratic, giving solutions, top-down system really doesn't work. But, that's probably more reflective of the style I've always had and I don't think that I'm called upon to do that more now than before. I think we were called to do that before. (John, p. 13)

Again, building agreements was far more important than autocratically imposing a solution to a conflict despite demands for time and efficiency. In addition, John viewed the compromise alternative, so often spoken about in Canadian historical accounts and so valued as a method for solving problems and resolving conflicts, as wanting. He related a conversation between himself and a member of his administrative staff, to demonstrate why compromise is neither an effective nor an efficient method for conflict resolution or problem-solving:

> [The staff member] said, "You know, I'm starting to know what you're talking about in terms of building agreements. I was listening to the radio the other day and talk was about compromise. Compromise isn't the answer is it? The answer is finding the agreement. You may have to compromise to get there but compromise isn't the goal. Building the agreement is the goal. Compromise might just be one of the techniques that comes into it." (John, p. 13-14)

In discussion regarding the deficiencies of the compromise approach, especially in regard to obtaining valued positions, John commented,

> if that's the end, if you stop at the compromise, forget it. You've got to take it to the full area where you agree and say, "This may not be what I wanted in total, but I agree that this is the best that we can get. This is the best we can possibly do given all of our circumstances." (John, p. 14)

The limitations of compromise and the efficacy of building agreements were reflected in John's dealings with the Board of Trustees. Here too, John actively sought to build agreements, and viewed policies developed by the Board and decisions made by simple majority at a Board Meeting as agreements. However, agreements made were not always those with which John could professionally agree. John outlined a major decision made by the Board of Trustees as one which caused him a significant amount of stress. When asked to what extent he had experienced professional and personal conflict in implementing Board decisions with which he did not agree, John could only identify a single decision. He outlined his philosophical and professional views about a superintendent's obligation to support Board decisions:

> Ultimately, I'm of the view that if I don't agree with the action of the Board, then I better work as hard as I can to change it and if I can't change it, then I better start looking for another job. I better not stay around here because first of all, loyalty is a very important part of the operation. You have to be loyal. It's required I think, from a moral point of view and certainly from a legal point of view. There's enough court cases to indicate that the employer can expect loyalty from an employee. If you can't change it, and you can't be loyal to it, then you better go someplace else! (John, p. 15)

John described the particular political decision, how he felt about it, what he did to implement the decision, and what he did to advise the Board in ultimately considering the reversal of the decision. The story, which deals with the cancellation of the French Immersion Kindergarten Program, is very instructive:

> There was one circumstance, a few years back, with the French Immersion Program. We had a number of trustees who wanted to pull the plug on French Immersion at the kindergarten level, mainly from a point of view of finance and the fact that a number of our students were [non-resident] students. They wanted to pull the plug at our last meeting in June, which is the fourth Tuesday in June, and discontinue the program. I indicated to the Board that I was really opposed to that from the point of view that we had the registration for the program. We had the budget in place. We had told everybody that it was going and to do it at that point in time was really a bad move and shouldn't be done. But nonetheless, the vote went 3-2. It was a split Board, and all of a sudden, we were left without a Kindergarten program for the next year. The Board then left it with me to make it happen. So, I determined that the best thing to do would be to call all of the parents together , explain to them what the decision was, explain to them the reasons that the Board had used in making it, and to ask for their help in finding a way in which I could accomplish this. I called a meeting the very next day. This was, you know, June the 24th and school was ending in a few days. So, I called a meeting the very next day and all the parents came out and shot me to pieces. They just leveled me off, the spokesman of the Board here. There was nothing I could do that was right. (John, p. 14-15)

Knowing that the decision made by the Board was the wrong one for the wrong reasons, John nonetheless demonstrated loyalty to the Board by attempting to implement the decision. Taking the brunt of the parents' anger, John remained "cool" throughout the parent meeting, and focused on the goal of the meeting. When asked how he felt and what he did at the meeting, John indicated,

> I'm the kind of a guy that I can stay pretty cool under those situations. People can fire and pepper away at me, and call me dirty names, and I don't get excited. I just simply focus on the goal that's to be there, ask them for their assistance, apologize for the inconvenience and the bad move and the things that are happening. I tried to indicate that there were reasons why the Board had made this. They were financial. They were real reasons. I didn't point out the fact that I had recommended to the contrary. I thought that's simply going to add to the fire. So, the end result of that meeting was the parents weren't satisfied with the fact that I couldn't change the decision and felt that they wanted to talk to the Board directly. I agreed that I would ask the Board to convene a meeting within a couple of days. The Board convened another meeting and met with the parents and then the Board caught hell. Then, the Board reinstated kindergarten. (John, p. 16)

By focusing on the reasons for the Board decision, not indicating to the parents that he advised the Board to the contrary in this matter, and by indicating that the Board reserved the ultimate authority in decision-making, John was successfully able to assist the parents in determining a course of action which would allow them to address their concerns directly to the Board. Notwithstanding the reversal of the Board decision and John's steps in obtaining that reversal, John experienced a professional and political conflict. The successful resolution of the conflicts was evidenced in the reintroduction of the French Immersion program and by the fact that, in John's perception, he has "no problem in talking to those people today" (John, p. 15).

In further discussions about the highly political nature of the advocacy groups, John recognized the pressure tactics that can be used to seek political ends and the adoption of pressure tactics by lobby groups:

> I think a big part of the conflict comes from the fact that the [advocacy group] has as one dimension of their organization, active lobbying as a technique. They train their members how to be active lobbyists and this is one of the things you get from that parent group that you don't get from others. Consequently, you get groups coming into School Board meetings actively lobbying and putting a lot of pressure on. That's a dimension that you don't see in other areas and we have an advisory group. We've invited them to sit in on it. We instruct our principals to establish good relationships with this parent body as with others and we really try to rise above it. We say, "Look, we're going to do a good job. We're going to try to set our objectives. We're going to try to work in the best interests of your children. We're going to do it within the constraints that we have. We're going to invite you to talk about it. But, in the end, we can only do what we can do. We need your support. We don't want you in the community saying that what is

> happening isn't good enough. What you're going to do is frighten other parents from getting into the program. If you always talk about the negatives and you paint French Immersion as a program with problems all the time, then you're really going to work to the disadvantage of the program. Let's start to talk about some of the strengths." We have some degree of co-operation, but there is the lobbying mentality. (John, p. 16)

John's comments indicated he recognized the impact of lobby groups on the decision-making process and that he placed a value on correctly and properly dealing with those groups. Secondly, by focusing on the education of children as the *prima facie* concern of the school system, by providing educational opportunities within the financial constraints experienced by his school jurisdiction, and by emphasizing strengths rather than weaknesses, John indicated that some degree of co-operation has been achieved between the school system and the lobby group. John also indicated that experiencing pressure from these groups was not pleasant and that groups which focus on negatives can have far-reaching consequences:

> Parents unfortunately don't understand the problems of dwelling only on the negative. The negative becomes the whole picture. The truth of the matter is the negative is such a small part of the picture. Even with that French Immersion program, we have a very strong program. (John, p. 16)

Beliefs About Power, Authority, and Decision-Making

In Alberta, the superintendent, through legislative authority, acts as the Chief Executive Officer for the school system. As such, exercising the formal and informal authority and power which accrue to the position can have an effect upon relationships between the superintendent and others within the school system. When asked if he felt uncomfortable with his use of legitimate, influential, or discretionary powers, John responded in the negative and offered an explanation for his view:

> I think part of that comes from my concept of power. I remember a model from administration talking about the fact that your authority comes from the people over whom you hold authority. I believe that's true. (John, p. 17)

He expounded further on his belief that power was given by those over whom one held authority:

> [Power is] given to you by them, and the extreme example of somebody facing a firing squad rather than yielding to the authority is the example that really

> convinces me that it's true. Authority is a basis of power. There is authority given with the position; there is an expectation that goes with it, but you don't have it if others don't give it to you. I can tell a school principal, I can ask a school principal, I can do whatever I want, but if they choose not to do it, they'll choose not to do it and they haven't followed my authority; then I can follow up and look at some sanctions, and they'll either choose to follow or comply or not or take the sanction. They may ultimately choose to be fired rather than comply, but in the end they're the people that make the choice about how they work. So that's a basis of power, and both of them, of course, in terms of influencing behavior--the authority may or may not influence behavior; that'll depend on the decision of the other person that you're trying to influence.
>
> So with that kind of concept, then I don't have any problem in using any power that I have, because I know that in the end the decision's going to be made by the other person as to whether or not they yield it. I've only, in all of my experience, had one teacher who absolutely refused to comply, and it was a request that I had given the person to apologize to another individual, and absolutely refused to do it. I would have liked to have had sufficient authority there to dismiss the person on the basis of that insubordination, but the legal advice I had was that all I could do was issue a strong reprimand which is what I did, and that's where we left it. Other than that, people normally, in the end, follow what I ask them to do. I don't believe in telling people what to do; because of my concept, I ask them. (John, p. 17)

John carefully distinguished between the authority which accrues to a position and that which a superintendent has because people give it to the superintendent. Recognizing that telling individuals what to do is a short-term and usually unacceptable situation because the individuals will do what they wish to do, often regardless of the threat or application of sanctions, John chose to ask individuals to do something and to seek their agreement on that course of action. Consistent with his earlier views on building agreements, John described how important the agreement building process was in effectively using power and authority to establish direction:

> They've agreed with me; we've built an agreement. They agree with me that it ought to be done. If they don't agree with me, I expect them to tell me. If I don't agree with them, I expect to tell them. In the end they may very well yield to the power or the authority that goes with this position rather than with the logic or whatever I present, but I don't believe that an order has any more strength than a request, and a request from me or a request from any person in an administrative position, if it's a reasonable request, properly given, the onus is on the other individual to follow it, to comply; the onus is there. So you may as well give it in as kind or a positive way as you possibly can, and the use of power, then, I don't have a problem with. None whatsoever! (John, p. 18)

John also recognized that because there is a perception of significant power vested in the superintendent's office, the accountability for the exercise of discretion was also significant. When asked how he exercised this discretion, he indicated that "I guess it gets back to doing right things right!" (John, p. 18). He also added, ". . . you have to do it in the right way, sure, and it has to be done with all of the proper ethical things in place" (John, p. 18). He commented further:

> I've often seen people step into administrative positions [and] start out in their very first few months in a consultative mode and somehow lose sight of the fact that that's the method that works the best, [and then] step into an autocratic mode, and have things blow up in their face and not realize that, what's the saying about power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely? I've seen that mistake made enough times with beginning administrators, and I don't know why I thought when I started out that I wouldn't do that, but I decided that I won't do that. (John, p. 19)

In reflecting upon his present role and administrative style, John noted the context in which he operated today was significantly different than that of the past, particularly in regard to the degree to which others want to be involved in the decision process. When asked if he felt frustrated over the extra time required to operate in this fashion, John was unequivocal in his response:

> No, none whatsoever. I'm of the view that you take the time that's necessary to build the agreement and make it a good one, and, sure, it takes a lot longer. That's one big difference between what I'm doing now and what I did, say, as a superintendent years ago or as a deputy. At that point in time people were willing to accept the kinds of decisions that were made more so than they are now. Now within the school system, within the community, there is a higher level of willingness on the part of people to voice their objection. It's very easy to make the decisions. We've always used the collaborative team-work approach, but you spend more time in it now because there's more people who want to have their say, and less people were willing to have their say in those days; they would accept it. I don't resent it. I think it's important! (John, p. 22)

When John was asked later in the interview about his own priorities, he promptly reaffirmed his belief in the shared notion of power and his reluctance to exercise unilateral power and authority which accrue to his office and position. In making decisions, John once again discussed the importance of building agreements but expanded upon his earlier statements to include the concept of shared decision-making:

> Probably it's collaborative decision making, team-work decision-making, shared decision-making. I think, in terms of shared decision-making--and again, it's rather curious to me that people are starting to talk about shared decision-making today as though it were something new--and it's something that we've been doing here all along. (John, p. 25)

However, John also recognized that while shared decision-making is desirable, there are also limitations which must be considered:

> The tests of expertise and relevance and jurisdiction--those are old theoretical models and they're still true. There's no point in asking everybody to be involved in every decision. If they have no interest, if it's not their jurisdiction, forget it. (John, p. 26)

When John was asked to describe a critical decision made within the last year which illustrated the concepts and beliefs he articulated about communication, shared decision-making, building agreements, use of power, and the exercise of discretion, he described the process used to develop the 1992-93 budget. The budget had far-reaching implications for the professional and para-professional staff of the school jurisdiction since 16.5 full time positions were eliminated. Asked if the disruptions the budget caused were painful, John stated, "Painful isn't really the word; it was a big job, very time consuming to build all of the communication bridges that you needed" (John, p. 20). In developing the budget, John viewed the budget itself as another problem which had to be solved but which simultaneously caused a great deal of anxiety for him. However, John viewed anxiety as a motivator, provided that the overall atmosphere in which he worked remained supportive:

> I certainly have anxieties. Whenever I do something new, I'm probably scared half to death to start with, so consequently, I'm scared half to death most of the time, I guess, because most of what I do is new even though you've been through it before. You go into a new setting, you're looking for the solution, you're trying to set the goal, you're trying to build the [agreements]. So you approach it and you're scared, anxious about it. So that would be a source of anxiety, [but in a] positive sense. The anxiety is a positive; it's a motivator. "Hey, we've got to get onto this thing; we've got to get it done." I suppose in my job, too, because you're working through other people, then, depending upon the actions of others can become a source of anxiety as you wait for this to happen. (John, p. 20)

Despite anxieties experienced in dealing with new situations and problems, John regarded problems as opportunities and challenges. He recognized that the approach taken to problem-solving would have a significant effect upon the resolution of those problems:

> How are you going to choose to treat it? Are you going to look at a problem as an opportunity and say, "Great! Now I know what I have to deal with, now I'm

> going to go after it?" Or are you going to look at a problem and wring your hands and say, "Oh, poor me! I have to do this"? [Problems impact you depending upon] how you're going to see it. (John, p. 22)

John's view of problems as opportunities was directly related to his view of the importance of seeking and building agreements in the problem solving process. He also recognized that as superintendent, he does not, can not, and did not have all of the answers to difficult problems. His own limitations, the knowledge that agreements from others are necessary in effecting a solution to problems, and a strong goal orientation also provided guidance through the budget dilemma. In discussing the agreement process, John stated,

> you've got majority rules in a Board, you've got consensus building in most other group settings that we're in. If it's an administrative team here, it's team building, it's consensus building. It's looking for agreements, it's finding out what the problems are. I remember early when I started in writing policies back as a deputy superintendent, reading some article about policy writing and saying, "You know, you tell me what the problems are, and I'll know what to find solutions for." In getting agreements you've got to make sure you get all of those problems out. You've got to get them all out, and once you get them out, then you start searching for solutions, and you'll start to find agreements on these solutions, too.
>
> Sometimes maybe it's just the least of the evils that you choose. Last year when we were building our budget and we ended up cutting 16.5 full-time-equivalent positions, we basically had the agreement of our School Board, we had the support of our school principals, and we had the support of each of our employee groups for the way in which we did it. When we were done, we had the support of our community for a 5% tax increase last year, and we had built agreements with all of these people. We had talked about the problems, we'd convinced them of the necessity of it, we'd asked them for their input, given them a little bit of control over their own destiny, each group had some say over it. (John, pp. 21-22)

For John, the process was as important as the outcome because the agreement and support of those who were affected by the budget were absolute necessities. John also recognized that while the stakeholders in his school jurisdiction were supportive of the budget outcomes, there was a concomitant *quid pro quo* for that support. In return for accepting the consequences of the budget, stakeholders expected the School Board and its administration would lobby the provincial government for a solution to the fiscal equity issue.

To meet this obligation, John and the School Board embarked upon a number of actions including the heightening of awareness in the community about the fiscal inequities faced by the school jurisdiction, and encouraging local people to become politically active in writing their MLA and the Minister of Education. John spoke forcefully about his advocacy for his own school jurisdiction:

> I just talked to the manager of the mall the other day talking about fiscal equity, the Minister's plan, the implications of it for [our school jurisdiction], letting them know what the facts are and letting them know that there are some constraints that exist and if they really want to have some influence on it, they'd better look in terms of talking to our MLA, talk to the Minister. Let it be known that you as a citizen are not satisfied with the way in which we're being treated, because if you say nothing it'll be taken as satisfaction, and we'll go ahead and build our next budget, and we can do it, and we can do it in whatever way; with whatever money we have, we can do it. We know that we can. You may or may not like the results. You'll have an opportunity to have some influence over it, but if you need a hundred dollars and if you only get fifty, that's the reality and that's what we'll work with. (John, pp. 23-24)

Arguing that the system of educational finance in Alberta was unfair to his community, John embarked upon a communication process to convince stakeholders in his school jurisdiction that the budget process used was right and that other options must be found to ensure greater fairness for taxpayers in general and for students in particular. Viewing information as the key to understanding, John operationalized accordingly:

> So we need to let our community know that if we don't get equity funding, it'll be even worse, and we don't have control over it; it's not something we can control. (John, p. 24)

After commenting that things in the future will probably become more difficult due to the overall fiscal situation facing the province, John became philosophical and reiterated his fundamental beliefs that problems are not insurmountable and that solutions must be found regardless of the difficulty:

> I think it'll get tougher. But having it tough doesn't mean it's bad necessarily; it's just tougher to deal with. It doesn't mean you can't find the solutions. [Deciding] what's important [and] what are the priorities [form the basis for action]. (John, p. 24)

When asked to review actions taken, including consultation with stakeholder groups to build agreements for the budget, John believed that the actions taken were right and justified. Flowing naturally from this statement was the request to define how John determined "rightness" of and "justification" for the means and ends associated with the budget. Asked how he could, upon reflection, say, "I did the right thing", John discussed both fundamental principles and an awareness of the necessity for pragmatism:

> I think the justification comes out of the fact that it was necessary. If you accept that it's necessary, that you've sought other alternatives, and you didn't set out to do this to start with--we set out with the intent of maintaining the current level of service to students; we obviously didn't achieve it, but we gave employees a choice in it, too. We said, "Look, the money available is this, and we understand that you have to be paid the going rate. But if you have to be paid the going rate, be it known that we can't hire as many people as we had thought. We are going to have to downsize, and you have a part to play in this decision; you have a choice to make. If you don't go for the going rate, if you're willing to work for a little bit less, then we're not going to have to reduce the staff complement. We're committed to balancing our budget over the next few years, so each employee group had that opportunity through the negotiating process, and essentially they said, "Well, how will you do it?"
>
> We talked about how it might be done. Each employee group had a say in it, and in the end they said, "You know, we think we've got to have this salary increase." "Okay, that's fine. Then you'll be paid that amount, but understand that you're going to be asked to do a little more because there aren't going to be as many of you to do the job." We built that agreement. The agreement was that "you can expect less, people; you had a choice to make, so you're part of this, too. It wasn't done without your involvement in the decision." (John, pp. 25-26)

Reconciling the differing interests of a number of stakeholder groups was important to John but so, too, was the necessity of balancing the budget for the school system. By involving the stakeholder groups in the decision-making process, John felt that they had an agreement to proceed with steps to achieve the end of a balanced budget. However, John was unequivocal when he stated that neither the outcome (i.e., balancing the budget) nor the process of involving the stakeholder groups in decision-making was the basis for determining rightness of actions. Once again John emphasized agreements, and the shared commitment to agreements as the social justification for actions taken:

> I don't think the process does it so much as the building of the agreement, what I call the social justifications: justified within a social context. It's agreed by the people within the community, by the Board, by the school principals, by the employees, by the stakeholders, that this is the best decision we can make given the circumstances that we've got, because there are alternative ways of doing it, but if this is the choice that comes out commonly that can be supported, then it is a social justification of it. (John, p. 26)

Using the concept of social justification, John moved to discuss how the notion of fairness applied to the budget decision and the ends which the decision caused. When asked if fairness applied, John responded,

> yes, very, very much so! The concept of fairness is so important all throughout; that's such an important thing, and it has to be seen as being fair. The lawyers' adage that not only must justice be done, but it must be seen to be done, and that's a very important thing. So they had some involvement in it; they saw it to be fair, given the circumstances which were there; they agreed that it was necessary. They didn't agree that it's the best that could ever happen; they didn't agree that it was the most desirable. Nor do I. I don't agree that getting rid of 16.5 staff positions is the best decision we could make. It's the best we could make given the circumstances. It's the least of the evils, you see, and it seemed to be fair, and it seemed to be necessary. So, yes, fairness very much comes in there. (John, p. 27)

The importance of the goals and priorities for the school system in relation to John's decision-making cannot be understated, even in relation to choosing the least undesirable alternative as a course of action as evidenced in the decisions about the 1992-93 budget:

> In terms of influence, that is a very strong influence. In fact, one of our principals today said, "You know, it's really remarkable how these School Board priorities influence us." Oh, yes. We take the Board goals, for example, and we do in our budgeting a couple of rather interesting papers. We have one here that's called "Future Considerations," and future considerations comes out of all of the input that I can get out of our system of what should we do? What are the most important things that we must do in order to help kids become the best they can be? So this builds right into our decision making. But the other one that we look at that's a very important background document for budgeting is a rather interesting exercise, too. It's called "The Review of 1991-92 Priorities and Objectives". (John, p. 30)

Beliefs About Personnel and Policy

In discussions about the moralities of justice and fairness, the interviewer mentioned to John that the literature suggested interdependence was assuming a greater role in how administrators regarded all aspects of the school system in general and personnel in particular. John immediately commented that the evaluation of school principals came to mind as an exemplar of how interdependence was being practiced in his school jurisdiction:

> The process that we use for evaluation of school principals comes to mind when you talk about this. We basically have a set of priorities, and this is an annual

> type of thing. Here's a set of priorities. I'll be meeting with a principal next [to discuss annual priorities]. These are our annual priorities that are being looked at. They take the School Board objectives and priorities, and they're built into that. They take his objectives and what he sees as important [and builds them in as well]. (John, p. 28)

Developing individual principal's priorities for the school year, in conjunction with those developed by the School Board, emphasized the notion of interdependence. Secondly, the principal was also required to develop his priorities in conjunction with those developed by the entire school staff. John stressed, once again, the notion of building agreements as crucial in the development of both the principal's priorities and those of the school. For John, the assessment of one is dependent upon the successful completion of all:

> They become part and parcel of the school action plan that sets things out that are to be done, and there's an agreement between the principal and myself that this is indeed what is important for him to work under in that year. But I'll involve [the Deputy Superintendent], our Director of Instruction, and the principal will in some cases bring the vice-principal, so we did this this morning, met two hours with one principal, two hours with another, and we will in the course of that meeting look at this, look at the school action plan that he has, and we'll affirm that that's the direction we're going. (John, p. 28)

Through discussion, the parties formed an agreement which was binding for the year. While revisions were encouraged as a result of the discussions, the agreement nonetheless reflected a tying together of the objectives and priorities for the district, the school, the school principal, and other district level administrators. As John noted,

> we built the agreement, but that's it, so now we've got a team of about four or six administrators at the Central Office and school level that have bought into the objectives that we've got set out in a Board policy here and annual priorities that we're looking at. (John, p. 28)

John emphasized that the school staff was extensively involved in developing the priorities for the schools. The end result, as John noted, was to have a system that is

> on the same track. We've built a team that's going in the same direction, and it's seen to be fair; it's seen to be very fair. I started this process a number of years ago. I really got our teacher-evaluation policy back in 1982, so we've being doing this for 10 years, and when Alberta Ed. came out with the five types of evaluation policies, it was old hat to us. (John, p. 29)

More importantly, the process was perceived to be fair by all parties concerned since the thrust was to co-operatively develop goals, objectives, and priorities. Evaluation, for the purposes of accountability and improvement could be readily facilitated. John also spoke of the difficulties in ensuring evaluation policies and procedures were perceived to be fair. After he noted their evaluation policies were still being refined to reflect changing times and circumstances, he commented upon the process used to gain the commitment of principals to the evaluation process:

> We're still turning the crank on that process. I can remember back in the early 80s, late '70s, some of our school principals saying to me, "Are you really going to do this? Are you going to evaluate me? I don't think this is fair. Well, you're okay, [John]; I'm not afraid of you. But what if somebody else comes along?" And right now, they've bought into this thing; they see evaluation as a goal-setting, positive affirmation of what they're doing, a recognition of what they're not doing, what they ought to be doing, and we're setting it as goals. (John, p. 29)

John's comment indicated the strong need to develop trust in both the individual conducting the evaluation and in the process and purposes of the evaluation. Changing the thrust of the evaluation to one in which goal setting, the achievement of those goals, and recognition of work accomplished were paramount took time, but John was prepared to work with the individuals to achieve a degree of comfort with the process. However, John was of the opinion that effectiveness was reflected in both process and product and that evaluation did not have to be likened to the Sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of the school principals:

> We're not saying, "You didn't do this!" But we're saying, "What needs to be done, and how far have you gone?" When you look at effectiveness you look at the process and you look at the product, and I use the analogy of a ship's captain starting out from Halifax and heading for Stockholm, Sweden, and as he goes he's going to make adjustments along the way, and that's the process of evaluation. You take continuous readings as you go. The goal is there. Now, the process evaluation is, "Okay, am I still headed in the right direction? And if I'm not, then I correct it a little bit." The product one is when I get there; that's the product. Most of what we do in education is a process evaluation, and we draw the inference that we're heading towards these goals that the principal has, and I'm checking with him on a continuous basis, and when I see that he's not, then we talk about the direction he's going, and we affirm the direction that he will be going. (John, pp. 29-30)

John indicated the school principals have committed to the process and were developing their annual priorities and goal statements to reflect system priorities, school priorities, and individual priorities. Achievement reports completed at the end of the year addressed both process and product. Principals were required to keep a log of their activities which allowed John, as superintendent, to affirm the work the principals did: "Most of the people do most things right most of the time. You affirm that and then help to set the goals as to where they ought to be going if they aren't" (John, p. 30).

John spoke extensively of the importance of the system priorities in developing goals and priorities for the individual schools, school administrators, and for himself. After citing a number of system priorities for the school year, John indicated that his own evaluation would be based, to a certain extent, on the degree to which stated system goals were accomplished:

> [Two main objectives for this year are] to achieve high levels of student performance [and] to achieve high levels of staff performance. Now, this isn't an evaluation of myself *per se*, but it's tantamount to that, because are we moving in this direction? So we do this as part of our strategic-planning process rather than as a singular part of the evaluation of my performance, but [my performance is tied to that]. You bet. And are the school principals doing what they ought to do, and are the teachers doing what they ought to do? And are the kids doing what they ought to do, Mr. [Superintendent]? It's all mine. Yes, the buck stops here. (John, pp. 30-31)

John accepted both the responsibility and accountability for ensuring the school system was on track. His comment showed that the work of the teachers, the principals, and, most importantly, the students were the crucial indicators of system success for him and that the annual board/system priorities and policies emphasized these areas.

In discussions about the importance of Board policy in establishing direction, John was aware that policies were heavily imbued with values and biases and, as a consequence, conflict can and does occur. Reflecting upon the issue of conflict, not only in policy, but also in administration in general, John became philosophical:

> One of the things that I commonly tell beginning administrators is that "You can expect that you're going to be dealing with two of the hardest things that people have to deal with, and it's very prevalent in administration, in educational

> administration, and that's conflict and ambiguity. You can just expect to be in the midst of conflict most of the time." (John, p. 31)

Recognizing that trustees represent the community-at-large, John had some appreciation for why trustees respond to citizen concerns and complaints. He recalled a conversation with another superintendent at a recent social gathering:

> I remember the guy that was superintendent before me, and it was rather interesting. We were celebrating [recently at a reunion] and we were essentially talking about these things. In terms of conflict, I remember his advice to me when I was a beginning deputy superintendent under him. He said, "You know, John, my advice to new trustees is that if they jump every time somebody barks, they're going to be up in the air most of the time." And that's true, that's true, because there's a lot of barking. (John, p. 31)

This trustee responsiveness, often without thoroughly checking the facts and acquiring information, can and does cause conflict. To reduce these potential conflict situations and to ensure that similar concerns and issues do not arise again, the Board acts to develop particular policies. In reflecting upon the policy process in his jurisdiction, John noted that no one policy in particular stood out as being representative of major conflict. Rather, he noted the entire policy area is replete with conflict:

> So there's a lot of conflict. If you look at this, we've just got a whole host of policies here, and all of them have competing views and interests and conflicts. When I read the question initially, I was thinking, "Is there any that stands out?" No, there isn't any that's bigger than others, because it's just there in all of them, and I could probably pick any one of them and talk about the issues. Personnel evaluation, as an example. (John, p. 32)

Using the personnel evaluation policy as an example, John explained that the system's policy, in place since 1982, did not have to be substantially changed to reflect pre-conditions established with the introduction of the Management and Finance Plan in 1984 (Alberta Education, 1984). Changes were made to ensure a greater degree of fairness for those being evaluated, especially in the area of appeals:

> The only thing that we didn't have in there was an elaboration of an appeal process, and I wrote a Superintendent's Procedure that sets out the appeal. The concept of appeal is in here, and the right to appeal, the fact that in our society the accused should be able to face their accuser; the accused should have the right to have their say; there should be the opportunity for another opinion and so forth. All of those things are in here, but the specifics weren't enough. (John, p. 32)

Rectifying the appeal process was not difficult for John. The difficulty lay in convincing field-based administrators to accept the concept of principals evaluating their teaching staff and then following through and actually doing the evaluations. One principal in particular came to mind when John was discussing the introduction of the revised policy:

> There was a lot of conflict in this one. We had a school principal at that time, in '82, who was probably about 60 years old. He'd been a school principal for 20 years; he hadn't been required to do formal evaluations. It was really difficult for him to come around to this. He was ultimately a very loyal employee, and if I would say to him, "I'd like you to do this," he would do it. So there wasn't conflict in the sense of him saying, "Go to hell!" but there was conflict in the sense that he was trying to find every excuse he could to justify and say, "I'm not going to do it." There was a lot of that, but we brought people together. (John, p. 32-33)

Other difficulties, such as convincing the teaching force such a policy was required, were also encountered. Consistent with John's philosophy of building agreements on the resolution of major issues, John was successful in changing how people viewed the evaluation process and, ultimately, in convincing people to change their behaviors. The process was still difficult:

> So by '82 we had this [policy] in place, and there were a number of years there where we went at it, we convinced people of the need, they accepted the need for it, then we figured out how to do it. I got an awful lot of legal advice through [the ASBA] in particular, and we built it and put it together, and it still stands the test of time. The interesting thing about this one, and this was in conflict with ATA policy of the day, because our policy said this: "The primary purpose of supervision and evaluation of personnel is to promote, achieve, and maintain and ensure a high standard of service in accordance with the requirements of the job." Most policies said the purpose is to improve [instruction]. (John, p. 33)

John also explained that the fundamental opposition to the teacher evaluation policy rested in conflicting views of the purposes of teacher evaluation. Noting that the ATA policy statements of the day supported teacher evaluations for the purposes of improving instruction, many policies developed by school jurisdictions followed this orientation. In John's jurisdiction, the focus was significantly different and he spoke of the orientation that the district followed and the consequences of implementing that orientation in their policy:

> We said, "No way! We are here to ensure a high standard of service, and that's why we're evaluating. The task is to acquire and evaluate information regarding the service by personnel so that decisions regarding personnel may be based on accurate and current information, and may support a high standard of service. That's why we're doing it." Well, that scared people half to death. They withdrew from the notion, so there's a lot of conflict. The ATA said, "The school principal shall not evaluate," and ours is quite clear here: "The principals shall." So we overcame all of these things, we built the agreements, and then the school principals threw in. In the end, I suppose, they respected the authority that I had and they said, "Yes, we'll do it because we have to do it." (John, p. 34)

When asked if the principals "threw in" because they trusted the superintendent, John did not give a definitive response and chose rather to emphasize the process that was used: "Well, maybe they did, but I didn't say, 'hey, you stupid so-and-so, you'll like it or lump it.' I just asked them and said, 'This is the requirement'" (John, p. 34).

John became more expansive about policy conflicts in general and the resolution of those conflicts. He agreed that policy conflicts are caused by different groups each trying to advance their own particular point of view. He expanded on his conception of the role of superintendent leadership in the policy process:

> Oh, yes, absolutely, a whole multitude of interests, and it's from all directions. It makes me think of--who was the philosopher that talked about the philosopher-king being able to see all perceptions? I'm not sure if it was Socrates or Plato, but there's one of them that was talking about the philosopher-king notion, and I thought that's right. You've really got to get into the position where, if you see all of these conflicting views and perceptions, then you know where you start to work; then you know how to start to bring things together and find something that works, that comes out of it and rises above you, that will rise above all of these things. (John, p. 34)

For John, superintendent leadership in the policy process required, first of all, the ability and willingness to determine the differing views and perceptions of the interest groups. Secondly, once these were determined, a course of action would emerge and that course of action would represent something which not only reconciled these interests, but would also serve to "rise above" the individual interests. John agreed that leaders should be philosophers, but felt the philosophical inclinations must also be tempered with a degree of pragmatism, so that processes can be found which work:

> I think it's got to be sorting it all out and identifying the goals, identifying the mission, and making sure that those goals way out in front of you are really clear. When you go ahead and do something, you make sure that you understand that

> this is a goal that you're working towards, and you get people to buy into it. (John, p. 34)

Appendix "F"

Letter Requesting Review of Analysis

#23 Brookside Avenue,
Spruce Grove, AB.
March 15, 1993

T7X 1B6

Dear Mr. :

After a lengthy period of time, I am happy to send you not only a copy of the transcript of your interview of mid-September, but also a copy of the analysis of the interview. The tape of the interview also has been enclosed, as you requested. Firstly, I must apologize for taking such a long time in sending you both the tape and the transcription of the interview but my own fingers and listening abilities proved to be vastly inadequate for the task at hand. As it turned out, I engaged the services of a transcriptionist to do all of the interviews and since the last interview was conducted on October 26, I was unable to get all of the transcripts until early December. While I did some work over the Christmas vacation, the early part of January seemed to be better suited to getting the work done. In addition, I read and re-read all of the transcripts a number of times in order to identify some themes for the initial data analysis. At this time, I have completed analyzing the transcripts and writing the stories of the eight superintendents.

Three main themes emerged from the initial data analysis: the political; the emphasis on relationships both within and outside the school district; and the perennial nature of conflicts within the political realm. While themes one and three may not seem very dissimilar, they are, in fact, markedly different since the former focuses on agreements and the resolution of multiple interests, and the latter focuses on conflicts and the damage which the conflicts can cause.

At any rate, your interview was included within (one of the themes) and I would ask, when you read the transcript, and the associated data analysis, that you read them with this context in mind. It may be a good idea to play the tape and read the transcript at the same time. After you read the transcript, I would appreciate if you would let me know if you believe that any inaccuracies exist within the transcript. Your checking of the transcript will greatly enhance the accuracy of the final product.

I am, however, very concerned that your "story" represents both fairly and accurately not only what you said but also my interpretation and analysis of what you said. The story highlights personal and professional beliefs, beliefs about power, authority and their impact upon decision-making and problem-solving, and your views of the policy process. I have tried to develop a summary after each of the highlights and I hope this is truly how you feel about important values, beliefs, and how they influence your actions within the political context. Please read the analysis carefully and feel free to make any additions and changes which you deem appropriate. These changes will of course, be reflected in the final analysis since the story is designed to be your story and not mine.

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Appendix "F" (Continued)

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I would appreciate receiving any feedback which you might wish to offer by the end of February. Feel free to mail a copy of any changes to me at my home address or fax the revisions to me at Alberta Education at 422-5255.

You will note that your pseudonym is (John) and I want to say that the name was chosen only for the purposes of convenience. If you wish to change the pseudonym, please suggest an alternative and I would be happy to change it.

At any rate, I want to thank you sincerely for the frank and revealing interview which you granted to me while I was gathering data for my Dissertation. Without your help, this study would not have been possible. Again, my thanks. I will be pleased to send you a final copy of the Dissertation as soon as it is completed.

Yours truly,

Terrence J. Wendel